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Goin' North: Tales of the Great Migration - Newspaper in Education Special Supplement

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GOIN' NORTH:
Tales of The Great Migration

Newspaper in Education Special Supplement; Monday, Feb. 4, 1985

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Join Us On the Journey

By reading and listening, you'll learn why black Americans left the South — and what they found in Philadelphia.

**Going North: Tales of the Great Migration** is a series of five radio programs in which the men and women who made the trip north tell of their own experiences: of their lives in the South, their reasons for leaving, the trip north, their expectations and initial impressions of the city.

They speak of problems faced in adjusting to urban life, of their work, housing, social lives, disappointments and accomplishments, and their current feelings about the decision to leave their home in "The City of Brotherly Love."

The five programs interweave recollections of people who made the trip north with rare recordings from the period — gospel music, skits by black comedians, speeches by such men as Booker T. Washington and James Weldon Johnson — all evoking the period and bringing their stories to life.

As you listen and read along, you will learn about black life in the city of Philadelphia during the 1920s, a time when segregation was the rule in the city's restaurants, hotels, theaters, public schools and workplaces. When over 85 percent of all black women in the work force were employed as domestics (and you got off Thursday afternoons and every other Sunday) and over 90 percent of all black men in industry were laborers. When Philadelphia sported not one, but four black banks, and West Philadelphia housed the "Cream of the Colored Race" in a land of "sun porches, patied palms and second mortgages."

The five programs that comprise Going North will air on WHYY 91-FM on consecutive Mondays at 4:25 p.m. beginning Feb. 11. Each program will be repeated the following Sunday at 6 a.m.

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**For a More Active Experience**

1. **Journal-Writing:** For the entire radio series, have the students keep a "Responding Journal" while reading along with the radio program. "Journal Entry" suggestions are offered for each of the five programs. See the "In the Classroom" section for each program. The purpose of this writing is to have the students express their feelings about the recollections of the different "veterans" of the Great Migration. Teachers should respond to each of the student entries. This activity emphasizes the learning of content through a free writing exercise.

2. **Data-Gathering:**
   a. During the series, have the students collect relevant information about the history of Southern black migration to Philadelphia in the 1920s from the oral histories and outside research, entering the data onto a five-column table with the following headings:
      i) Information Source
      ii) Reasons for Leaving
      iii) Expectations
      iv) First Impressions
      v) Work
   b. As a summary to the series, have the students discuss the information they collected from listening to and reading the oral histories and additional information they collected from outside sources. Have the students draw some generalizations about the Southern blacks' migration experience. Then have them write a couple of paragraphs on how these generalizations may apply to the migration experience of other groups European immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Mexican and Latin American migrants in the 20th century, and Asian immigrants who have come in the last decade.

3. **Historical Pen Pal:** Before the series begins, have the students read the short biographical sketches of the different "veterans" of the Great Migration that appear at the end of this supplement. Have a chance to buy a "veteran" who most interests them. Tell the students that at the end of the radio series, they will write a letter to the "veterans" of their choice. Suggest to the students that, as they listen to and read through the radio series, they should develop a list of comments and questions to include in their letters.

When a final version of the letter is complete, have the students send their letters to the following address:

   "Tales of the Great Migration Project"
   Atwater Kent Museum
   15 South 7th Street
   Philadelphia, PA 19106

   [Image: Local News photo]

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**BOOKER T. WASHINGTON: "CAST DOWN YOUR BUCKETS"**

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**Life in The South**

The legacy of slavery did not die with Emancipation. Around the turn of the century, Southern blacks were "free" in name only. Jim Crow and "Separate but Equal" kept blacks in a state of servitude and fear.

Pope raised everything we ate, even corn. He, and we, raised corn as we could make cornmeal out of — bread, and everythine else. We didn't have to go to the store too many times. He raised potatoes two kinds, greens, beans, cabbage, every-thing and also strawberries. We had that and when I was a kid we used to ... what they call blueberries. They used to grow wild, and we used to go through the woods and pick them.

In the summertime you had to be careful. Otherwise a snake would drop down on your head (laugh). And ah, my life with my parents, I was too young to see, my father was a good sharecropper. The white man would say, "Come and work for me and I'll give you this and I'll give you that," but my father always held off hogs and kept a cow for milk. And they hired horses to run the farm. (Minnie Whitney)

Life in the rural South revolved around the season. It was a subsistence existence for most. The little money realized from the cash crop, usually cotton or tobacco, in the Early states, was supplemented by family members hiring out either the white planter on whose land they worked or to other local landowners. In slack times the men cut wood, hired out to the local sawmills or joined the floating labor gangs that traveled across the South. Mothers worked in the "big house" for a dollar a week. During planting and harvesting seasons the whole family worked in the fields. Up at the break of dawn and not finished till the sun went down.

Sunday was the best day of the week. Everybody would put on their best clothes — store bought — and walk or ride the few miles to church where you'd spend the whole day. There were prayer groups and Sunday school in the morning, followed by two, sometimes three services a day. For many, Sundays provided the only opportunity to catch up on the latest news, swap stories and pass the time. The young boys and girls attended BPU, eyed each other across the aisles and perhaps would ask for permission to walk each other home. Most people liked life on the farm and preferred to stay pretty much to themselves.

Yeah, they treated you all right in Virginia. Treated you all right. They tell you, "on this side of the fence, and you on that side of the fence. You stay on this side of the fence and we stay on our side." That's the way we worked it and we lived that way.

**Economic Self-help and Separation of Races**

Economic self-help and separation of the races encoded in a doctrine of "Separate but Equal" was the order of the day, and the great Negro leader, Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee, its official and leader.

Mr. President and director of the board of directors and citizens:

One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil or moral welfare of this section can disregard this fact and expect to come to any moment of its population and reach the highest success.

For those of my race who depend upon bettering their conditions in a foreign land who underestimate the importance of preserving friendly relations with the Southern white man who is their next-door neighbor, I would say, "Cast down your buckets where you are." Cast it down making free in every way with the people of all races by whom you are surrounded.

For those of the white race who look for the incoming of those of foreign birth and habits to bring prosperity to the South, were I perchance to see...

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See South Next Page
South

Continued from Preceding Page

mitted, I would repeat what I have said to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the 8 millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you accepted in days when you have proven treacherous, meant the ruin of your fireside. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strife and labor wars, filled your fields, cleared your forests, built your railroads and cities, brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. (Booker T. Washington, Atlantic Exposition Address of 1896. Recorded in 1908. Columbia, private printing.)

Though Dr. Washington might desire for the races, realizing their mutual self-interest and interdependence, to live in harmony and accord, during the early decades of the 20th century the white South was in no mood to improve relations between the races. Separate was just fine. But equal? Surrounding the peaceful world of life on the farm hung a world of segregation and economic exploitation. The South was in the grip of a rising tide of white racism. White supremacy and Jim Crow were in ascendancy, as the basic human rights and economic independence of the Southern black were systematically undermined and destroyed.

A debt-based crop system in the form of sharecropping and tenant farming bound the rural black as firmly to the soil as slavery ever had. In these arrangements, the white landowner would rent a section of his land either for a percentage of the crop or hard cash. The way the system was supposed to work, the crop was sold at market. Then the white landlord talled up the debt, took his share, and then paid the black what was left. But in such a system based on trust, fear and a legacy of slavery, it was all too often the black farmer never got his fair share of the crop. White farmers and sharecroppers regularly cheated the often illiterate or semi-literate black sharecroppers with little fear of reprisal.

You see, my father, his father and mother both were slaves, and my mother's father and mother both were slaves. And you know, was a rule they say that whatever the white man would tell them, they believed him. And if he says that you didn't earn but five dollars this year, they believed him. Some of them was still living under the bondage of slavery. (Minnie Whitney)

And what might happen should the sharecropper get wise?

There was a man who had been working sharecropping for a gentleman, and naturally he couldn't read or either write. And every year he would, regardless of how much cotton he made, he would bring him out just so he had a little bit left. So he got kind of wise, and what he did at harvest time, he made six bales of cotton that year. And he took four to town on the wagon, and his white landlord that he was sharecropping with met him. And there was cotton buyers on the street. When the four bales of cotton were sold they went to the bank, and naturally the man that you sharecropped with, he pays for half and you pay for half. So when everything was over he told him, "You know, you did marvelous this year. You cleared $350."

So the colored fellow didn't say anything at all. But in a couple of weeks he took two more bales of cotton to town. (The landlord found out.) So he called him up and told him he wanted to meet him in town. So when he met him he said, "I had an idea that you were cheating me, but I didn't have no way of knowing." He said, "Now you say I don't owe you anything." He says, "No, you paid off and you cleared $350." He said, "Now, when we sell that I got two more bales of cotton."

So he says, "Now why didn't you tell me that at first? Now I got to go over all these figures and you might clear just a little something." So, anyway, from that they started an argument, you know, and this white man, well, he jumped on him and hitched the horses to him like he was a wagon and drove him and drug him through the street of Abbeville, S.C., and took him down in the park and hung him. Now that's just as true as I'm looking at you. But you wasn't allowed to say anything about it.

I'm not going to say anything about this. (Hughes Childs)

The common and widespread cheating of tenants and sharecroppers was matched in local government by a system of convict leasing (Booker T. Washington) which made money on hiring out their chain gangs. A black man could be picked up for practically anything. Vagrancy became a catch-all for everything from lounging on street corners to walking down the street in broad daylight without a job. In 1920 Mississippi imposed a law making chicken stealing a crime punishable by five years' imprisonment and/or a fine of $200.

Soon after marrying, Hughes Childs moved with his bride from the family farm into Abbeville, S.C., and began to look for work.

You couldn't walk the streets unless you had a job. I had to stay in the house until I got a job, because if I walked in the street, like in the middle of the day, and if the office seen me, and I couldn't prove that I had a job, they would lock me up. So what she (his wife) would do would be to have you would have to pack a lunch kettle, you know, and carry it like you was going to work; pretend like you had a job. (Hughes Childs)

Here limited protection against the state could be afforded by the white landlord who wanted to protect his "niggers."

Those boys in the city caught hell. Them farmers done all right. They workin' on the farm, and if you got in trouble down there on the farm, the white fellas would get you out. You got a couple of those colored fellows working on your farm. Well, them fellows get in trouble, you get them out. You go over to the courthouse, you say, "I warn him. Bigigger I got. I want him. I need him on my farm." Well, they let him go. Well, you go and say, "Good bigger. And you don't get in no more trouble. You go back." And he come back home. 'Cause all them colored fellas, they worked with them white fellas on the farm. And they take care of their colored fellas. (James Plunkett)

Trece were set on every side, both to forcibly bond the black farmer to the white landowners, to keep blacks "in their places," and to squeeze every last drop of money out of black labor. Mr. Robinson grew up in rural Georgia.

I was born Dec. 11, 1880. And therefore the Lord has brought me safe this far and no bad . . . no marks against me. Notin' like that. Everything I did . . . I tried to do and if I saw it, you done somethin', and if I known it was wrong, I'd run and get away from you 'cause they white folks was strict.

I had done somethin' one time and that stuff was. I didn't go in the orchard, but I received three peaches. Well, the man said, "The receiver is just as bad as the rogue." See, that's why . . . I didn't go in the orchard, and I listened right in the man's face when he said if I'm just older — I wasn't but 8 years old — that presented it just a little bigger. "I did put it in jail, put him on the chain gang," I listened right at it. And I feared of that because I heard 'em workin' on it. I never was on it. But I heard 'em workin', heard 'em singin' on that and workin' on the road.

My father had to pay $21 for three peaches. He had to pay it because I received the peaches there. The white fellow whose plantation we were on paid it. (William Robinson, age 102)

In the 1880s, $21 could be well over a year's wages. The white landlord paid the bill — or said he did — and the debt of the Robinson family mounted, binding them to the soil.

I was very careful in what I did because I didn't want my parents to get hurt. I swallowed many things when I was goin' back and forth.

See SOUTH Next Page

Black farmers in a cotton field near Dallas, Texas, around 1910

William Robinson: the chain gang was a constant threat.
South

Continued from Preceding Page

there on account that I didn’t want my parents to get hurt. Because they would have hunted me down and them Southern white people where I came from, they was rough. And if you meet them on the road and you had to go by and it was a small... If you was there first, you better wait there the next birch schoolin’. And that is something that now I begin to understand, and how I felt about it. And I always think, if I had known that then know, I guess I wouldn’t be here, because you know you speak out, and you get hurt. (Mamie Whitner)

And what could you do about it? The courts, of course, offered little redress; indeed, they were an integral part of the system to “keep the Negro in his place.”

Dr. Marion Ballard, former pastor of Tindley Temple, grew up on an island off the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

They could accuse you of anything. And the system that we had there in the county, you would not be accepted as a white person said differently.

I remember a man, a young man he was, who worked on the boat with a white man. He was the captain and owned the boat. Well, somehow this young black fellow had his arm broken on the boat. And he, thinking to get compensation for what he did. And the white man said he didn’t work on the boat. And that was it. Regardless of what others who had seen him work... it didn’t make any difference.

White captain said he didn’t work on it, so he didn’t work on it. That was the kind of system you had to live with. You had absolutely no chance of winning anything if you were contesting anything that a white person said. You had no chance. (Marion Ballard)

First case, Sadie Anderson. Yes sir, that’s me. Thirty days in jail. That’s me. Lock her up, Dan. ("Virginia Judge Southern Court Scene") recording.

Today the one practice of the turn-of-the-century South that horrifies us perhaps more than any other is lynching, and that is black-to-black. That was synonymous with the rape of a white woman by a black man.

During this period the great fear white Southerners had of black assault on their women reached the point of a psychosis. No actual assault need take place. All that was necessary was for a black man to be seen “where he shouldn’t be seen” for a strong rope and a tall tree to seal his fate.

And a double standard, of course, prevailed. White men could and did rape, and that was not considered a major offense, whereas the same act was synonymous with the rape of a white woman by a black man.

Economic exploitation, dehumanization, violence, Jim Crow, black code: They were all weapons in the Southern racial arsenal. They all played their role. But few were more effective than ignorance.

See, our schooling was only four months. And out of those four months, I guess I went maybe half of them. I guess maybe I went for two months because I had to stay home and work, you see. You didn’t have to go to school like you do here. Oh, no, no. I had to stay home and work. So I went to school whenever she [Miss Brown] let me go. I remember children would pass by and say, "Willie, are you going to school?" I said, "No, I’m not going to school." I would just run around the house and see I didn’t let her see me cry because I would get a beating. And I would run around the house and cry. I wanted to go to school. (Willa Allen)

No state had a compulsory education law, and it was estimated that under 40 percent of all school-aged children attended regularly. The schools did have been plagued by run-down buildings, old and insufficient materials and books, and underqualified teachers. It was a problem for a community that, as a whole, placed greater emphasis on education than their white counterparts.

In South Carolina the school year was only half as long as for white children, only 78 days a year. And even that time wasn’t assured, as children could be pulled from school to work on the farms of either their parents or local whites. James Plunkett grew up in rural Virginia:

Yeah, I was 8 years old, 9 years old when I started farming. I didn’t get to go to school much. If the teacher didn’t allow you to send your kids to school. Not in them days. Cause if you didn’t, you didn’t have much! And if you didn’t have much, you didn’t have much. So I went to school whenever she [Miss Brown] let me go. I remember

In the Classroom

1. Journal Entry: Have the students choose any one of the comments made by the “veterans” of the Great Migration that they have read and/or listened to which left a special impression on them. Have the students write their feelings about the experiences of others that they read or hear and then have them write about some of the questions that the comments have raised for them.

2. Define the following words used in the program:

- apartheid
- nonviolent resistance
- Congress of Racial Equality
- economic boycott
- segregated education
- economic exploitation
- dehumanization
- strong rope and a tall tree

3. For Research and Discussion:

- Have the students read Booker T. Washington’s “Atlanta Compromise” speech of 1895. Then have them discuss their reactions to his advice that Dr. Washington offered to Southern blacks, and whether or not his speech would have been appropriate or effective in the 1960s. Ask the students to discuss how Dr. Washington’s ideas are different and/or similar to the ideas of black leaders today.

- In the Classroom, the students read the entire section on “Life in the South.” Ask them: Which view of Southern black life do you think was more representative?
The Great Migration

Goin' North

When World War I slowed immigration from Europe, Northern industries looked elsewhere for a source of cheap labor. Southern blacks soon began coming north by the trainload.

I was born in 1903 and went to the country schools around 12. And then I was working on the farm. We worked as sharecroppers, that means we didn't make much money. My father had given me a field of tobacco, a couple of acres and when it was ready for picking I got my share in 1910 I had $10, no, $12 for a whole year's work.

And I told my father, we were out in the cotton field picking cotton, that day I left home. And I told my father that he had promised me a trip to Philadelphia. And I asked him when. He said, "You was takin' about how little money I had made a seat. But a whole one of them didn't have any seat. But they hid when the man come through and check, you see, you hide under the seat like that. And that's the way we get away from there. (Ernest Grey)

As the story goes, William Atlee, vice president in charge of operations for the Pennsylvania Railroad, conceived the idea of sending to Dix. Deep South for Negro workers. He commissioned Rev. James Duckrey, a Baptist minister and messenger in his office, as his recruiter and labor agent. In the spring of 1916, Duckrey went down to Jacksonville, Fla., and quickly returned with several trainloads of Negro laborers.

So we had been coming north for decades became a rush, and by the late summer of 1916, the beginnings of an exodus that would change the shape of the nation.

In all, some 1.5 million blacks would leave the South between 1916 and 1929. 500,000 of them in the late 1910s alone. Philadelphia, with its many industries and close proximity to the South, from the start was one of the major destination points. Between 1916 and 1918, some 49,000 people would pour into the city at a rate of 17,000 per month. By 1918, when 8,000 and 12,000 ar- rived between April and June. The city's black population would leap from 84,000 in 1910 to 134,000 in 1920, and 219,000 a decade later.

Within weeks after the first trainload left Jacksonville, the exodus had begun in earnest.

The railroads weren't the only organizations sending southerners to the north. The Armstrong Association of Philadelphia, founded in 1907 by Quakers primarily as an employment bureau. Doing business as "America's Number One Negro Recruitment Agency," the association sent thousands of blacks north.

As the migration grew, Southern authorities became alarmed by the flight. Due to the previous lack of Northern interest in Negro labor, they had never before had to worry about a massive flight of their "niggers." But as warfonts emptied of their longhorns, and the cotton fields and mines were left abandoned, their dependence upon what had been a mistrusted and malcontent labor force became all too apparent.

The influx of Negroes, said, "We can't come to your house and catch a train. And they can't come to your house, and that's the station there for you!"

"Yes."

"Discharged!"

Everybody went back to the station and most people got on their trains and came north. (Edgar Campbell)

The agents made an address to the groups of negroes coming into town. July 8th, the day that crowds left the city for the Four Mile Hill on the Louisville road. Farmhands and workers from rural districts are coming in from all parts of the country because they have been promised $1.80 a day with chance for advance- ment. They have their suitcases, some are only in jumpers and overalls, but declare that if once in the state of Pennsylvania they will never

A Southern family, newly arrived in the city, around 1925.

Photo Courtesy of Behrenberg Collection, New York Public Library

We went to the railroad station on West Broad Street in Savannah. Some of the authorities were resentful because so many of the blacks were leaving and they objected to it. And I've never forget it as a little boy, they decided they were going to pick up all these people that was at the station, and they said they were lounging around. And they took - they had a hearing in the court as I re- member. And the judge was named Judge Schwartz. And the officer and the authorities... and the judge said, "What did you bring these people here for?"

He said, "Well, they were all picked up at the station waiting to go north." I remember it as if it were yesterday, Judge Schwartz said, "They can't come to my house and catch a train. And they can't come to your house, and that's the station there for you!"

"Yes."

"Discharged!"

Everybody went back to the station and most people got on their trains and came north. (Edgar Campbell)

The agent made an address to the members of the race on Monday, August 7, the day that crowds left the city for the Four Mile Hill on the Louisville road. Farmhands and workers from rural districts are coming in from all parts of the country because they have been promised $1.80 a day with chance for advance- ment. They have their suitcases, some are only in jumpers and overalls, but declare that if once in the state of Pennsylvania they will never.
North

Continued from preceding page

set foot in Georgia again.

They are determined not to live where taxation without representation is
considered legal. (Chicago Defender, Aug. 19, 1916)

My father...they knew he was a carpenter and they knew they needed
those kind of men up north. You know how he had to get away? They went
to church and this man, this recruiter, gave them a long list of things
they had to do. They was going to take away...They interviewed
carpenters...there were plumbers. There were painters. So he
got all those men together and said, "I'm going to take all you men
together at one time."

What they had to do at a certain time, in the dark of night...they had to
do it at a certain time in the dark of night...they had to go to the
skirts of the city on a railroad spur and they had put an old raggedy car on
that railroad spur. He said at a certain time he was going to be on
that car. When everything was ready he was going to light a cigarette on
the deck of that old car and the men that was in the car and the men
that was hidden — my father was one...they were hidden in the
bushes alongside of that thing, lying in the bushes. Said, "Now don't
you all smoke or talk or do nothing, just..."

When he lit that cigarette, all of them jumped right up and got in that
car, and everybody was quiet and not a light or anything. What they did
was little shifter or a little engine came, hitched onto that car, and the train,
Broadway Limited, was going north. He stuck it on the back of that last
car, and when that pulled out, it pulled on and the other boys knew
that all of them was in this thing, before it got into New York City,
unbeknownst that little car and pushed it aside; that little shifter come and
pushed that car sided, way over there. And the men had to stay
in that car till just about daylight when a big grey van came and they got out
of that van and came to where they was going to be hired. And that's how
my father got away. (William Brown)

The desire to flee north spread like wildfire. The flowgates were open,
and black people of all kinds, young and old, men, and women, were
"cast down their buckets where they were," as the saying goes;
skilled, like the Jews fleeing Egypt,
packed up their belongings and
made their way north. All the
people said, "Why go up there?" and "You know what is down here.
You don't know what you run into out there." And the answer was,
that the more people wanted to go. I remember it was if you was 16.
They was about to go off at the station waiting to get on that train to
the north. There was a lot of them. I don't know how many of the
people didn't even...Some of them walked out of their homes and didn't
even take nothing. (Edgar Campbell)

During the early years of the war the North loved for Southern
workers was accompanied by a series of natural calamities in Dixie
that fueled the desire to leave. The most important
of these occurrences was a little green bug then making its way
from Mexico up through Texas and
into the Deep South. The boll weevil ate its way east, forcing thousands
off the land and leaving ruin in its wake.

In the summer of 1916 severe floods
and hunger plagued MississippI. Unable to stay on the farms, unwanted
in the towns and cities, many had no choice but to move on.

So there you have it. All the ingredients
were present: the push and the pull.

Hughes Childs, one of nine children,
grew up on a cotton farm outside of Alabaster, Ala.

In 1916 it made 16 bales of cotton; 1917 that was cut in half. The next
year was nothing! People that used to have a horse, had a cow
they were lucky to get a. So you see, what you are going to do.
Because in the South at that particular time, the only thing
we had to make money was the cotton. That was the only commodity
we had. That's where we get our money from.

But the boll weevil came in, and that's when we lost our commodities,
here, because the farmer didn't have no other place to go. And I
often wonder why when the boll weevil came, was God's work. He did
that for a purpose because the people was cheating the people so badly
that he got tired of them cheating them, so he just said, "Now I'm going
to send myself down there as some thing and tear it up." (Hughes Childs)

In Philadelphia, representatives of the Armstrong Association surveyed
newspapers and asked questions seeking the reasons for coming north,
about their past and current lives.

The reason given most often was that they had come for better wages.
A man or woman could make in a day what they had made in the South in a
week. But, of course, there was more to it than that.

Southerner J. Max Barber was presi
dent of the Philadelphia branch of the
 movement when the Great Migation
began.

Let one who was born and raised in
the South and who is thoroughly in
touch with southern conditions
see reasons for coming north.

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dent of the Philadelphia branch of the
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Let one who was born and raised in
the South and who is thoroughly in
touch with southern conditions
see reasons for coming north.

You have been told that colored people make a mistake when they leave the South to seek
employment in the Northern sections of our country. There are, those black and
white, who attempt to make the colored people in the Southern States believe that it is impossible for them
to live any where north of the Mason and Dixon Line. The best answer to such claims is in its states as
they are. All honest people are agreed that the opportunities for employment are better in the North today
for colored people than they have ever been. The wages paid are higher than what they get in the South.
The average wage paid to colored men in the South is not over $1.00 per day for ten hours work. The
average wage in the North is over $2.00 per day for eight hours, more than double what it is in the
South. The cost of food and clothing are about the same. House rent is higher in some places, but not
double what it is in the South. These three items are the principal expenses of living. If the earnings
are more than double and only one of the three principal expenses is higher, you can easily determine
for yourself whether or not you will make a mistake to come North.

In the South the average school term for colored children is about three months; in the North
the average school term is ten months, compulsory up to 16 years.

In the South colored men are more and more being crowded out of the best employments. In the
North the best employments are just beginning to be opened to colored men.

In the South colored men are denied the right to vote in the large majority of the States. In the
North every man is guaranteed the right to vote.

In the South justice is administered by the color of the skin. In the North justice is administered
according to law.

There is prejudice in the North, to be sure, but that prejudice has not to this time broken down the
law of justice.

NO EASY MONEY NORTH

The Men and Women who don't want to work had better stay in the South. Men and women who
want to work steadily can find employment in the North, and will be paid what their labor is worth.

YOUR RIGHT TO COME

There is no law that can keep you from coming North. You can come if you want to come. The colored people of the South certainly have a stronger claim on the employment of the Northern section of our country than the foreigners of Europe.

THE CHURCH THE HAVEN

Civilization is founded on Christianity. The Church is the organized agency of Christianity. When
you go into a strange community, the first thing you should do is to find the Church. To be satisfied,
you should find the church of your choice, and when you find the church of your choice, join — connect yourself with the church.

The church is the haven of safety. The taint of wickedness are on every hand. Satan is busy. His
forces are organized. To keep out of his clutches you must keep in the ranks of God's army. Momher Thereth sends you these greetings, and if you come to Philadelphia we invite you to come within her fold. The members of the Mother Church of the African Methodist Connexion, will do everything in their power to help you, and make you welcome to their church and their homes.

Yours in His name,

MOTHER BETHAL INFORMATION BUREAU,

C. H. Potts

D. A. HART, Chairman

Robert T. Allen

D. Jas. Mason

Rev. R. J. Williams, Pastor

Geo. T. Corson

Col. P. H. Edwards, President Corporation

This letter was circulated by Mother Bethel Church in Philadelphia to combat the arguments of white Southerners who were trying to stop the Migration

Imagine that if my father hadn't had an accident with the man he was working with before, I don't think we would have been up here, because I think the country stayed in a lot of us. Our mother and father raised 11 children. And at that time, I imagine they had the children to help them on the farm, because you needed them, especially if you were sharecropping. So my father was always a good farmer, and with a good children helping him, he always managed.

And then my father, he would go work in the sawmill. And that was my money then. And while he was working in the sawmill, he said his boss would pay him cash money. He said, told him all his — and I'm going to use the word that this

See NORTH: Next Page
North

Continued from Preceding Page

man used — he said all his niggers he had was going to be paid in his store. I imagine that’s one little town where everybody owned everything, so that’s why he had the groceries and everything.

So my father said he told him, “I don’t need your food because I have plenty of my own and I need this money to buy my children shoes and clothes and things like that.” And the man would not give it to him. So he came home — my mother told me this — my father came home and he was very sad and downhearted, and then he got angry and he told my mother, he said, “He’s going to give me my money!” And he went back to the mill where the man was and asked him and he said he pleased with him. He said, “Please give me my money.” He said the man put his hands into his pocket and took it out and threw the money on the ground and told him he would never live to spend it.

Well, in those days they used the expression, “The white man ruled.” So when they used those kinds of terms you know what they mean. So my father came home and packed some clothes and my mother packed him some lunch, and he left the family. And after my father came to Philadelphia, he got a job and he worked and saved his money, and then he went for all of us and we all came up together. (Annabelle White)

Walter Gay grew up in Dawson, Ga.

We had bad trouble with the Caucasian majority. My sister had been beat. I had been beaten over trifles. My sister had been beat because she refused to walk on the side of the street reserved for blacks. My beating was over my father getting me a bicycle which was the eyecatcher for the town. And those who were jealous of it took it out on me.

I’ve heard my parents state that even at that age, they realized that if I stayed in the South I would get killed (that I was so determined in certain fields, civil rights fields and that sort of thing, that it was dangerous, that I would’ve been killed). And I think this is the background which motivated them more than the boll weevil of deciding to leave.”

Walter Gay

Edgar Campbell recalls some migrated north with no possessions

“[I’ve heard my parents state that even at that age, they realized that if I stayed in the South I would get killed (that I was so determined in certain fields, civil rights fields and that sort of thing, that it was dangerous, that I would’ve been killed). And I think this is the background which motivated them more than the boll weevil of deciding to leave.”

Walter Gay

North

Beulah Collins came north so her child could be educated

Some migrants, immigrants, refugees, deprivations, expulsions, exodus, contigence, north

In the Classroom

1. Journal Entry: Have the students pretend that they lived in the South during the period of the Great Migration. Ask them to write down whether they would have gone north or stayed in the South, and the reasons for their decision.

2. Define the following words used in this program:

   migrants
   immigrants
   homelessness
   belligerents
   deprivations
   expulsions
   exodus
   контигенция

3. For Research and Discussion:

   a. Using a map of the United States, have the students trace the journey of Southern blacks from Savannah, Ga., and Jacksonvile, Fl., to Philadelphia and from Atlanta, Ga., to New York City.

   b. On the back of the map, have the students write a couple of paragraphs on the following questions:

   i) What arrangements did the black migrants have to make in order to make the trip north?

   ii) What belongings would they choose to take with them, and what would they leave behind?

   iii) What problems would the migrants encounter in making the trip to the North?

   c. Have the students prepare a TV talk show program with the guests being the following "veterans": Mr. Brown, Edgar Campbell, Beulah Collins and Ernest Gray.

   d. Have each student prepare two or three questions that they would like to ask the guests. Conduct the program by having students volunteer to be the host and the guests, with the rest of the class as the audience.

   e. Have the host introduce each of the guests, using the information in the biographical profiles at the end of this supplement, and then have the host direct the audience’s questions to each guest.
The Newcomers

Most of the blacks who came to Philadelphia in the Great Migration had come from the farms of the South. The city was an alien experience for them. Worse, they found themselves the victims of bias here, too — sometimes even from other blacks.

By 1930, Philadelphia's black population had climbed to 220,000 people, of whom only 30 percent were born in the state of Pennsylvania. Nineteen percent were born in Virginia, the traditional leader. 13 percent in South Carolina, and 11 percent in Georgia. The city's black population had increased almost 64 percent in a single decade, and grown from 5 percent of the city's population in 1910 to about 17 percent in 1930.

Oh my God. You could go to Broad Street Station, and I'm telling you the truth, I never seen nothing like it. People would be in there like that. Just like that, comin' from the South. People there meetin' them and people comin' in. Oooohh, it was awful. I never saw nothing like it. And that was every day and especially, especially on weekends. Yeah, comin' in droves, and they certainly was.

It was pathetic. I'm tellin' you, to see them. But they came and they stayed. That's the way they came up, by the hundreds. And that wasn't just one day but years in and out.

Sure was. (Crosby Brittenum)

Heading north, you transferred trains in Washington, D.C, and for the first time saw in the same cars as the whites. Finally you were in the North. How exciting it all must have been. Heading for a new life in the big city: visions of good jobs and easy money. There were the bright lights, and they treated you like a human being, all mixed up with warnings of the lurking dangers and temptations of the big city and, last but not least, fear of that cold weather.

My mother told me when I came here, don't walk close to the walls because they have trap doors and you would fall in or someone would pull you in, and we would never see you again, laughter! So you were afraid to go into people's houses to work after that. They say like the doctors, the doctors would get you. Because they wanted to experiment on you. So you got to be very careful when you go to Philadelphia. I was scared. (Hattie Alexander)

Rev. Charles Albert Tindley was one of Philadelphia's most influential pastors when the Great Migration began.

Philadelphia ... if I could have taken my three children and turned right around and gone back to Jacksonville, I would have. In the first place, I wasn't used to living in houses all built together. It seemed to me when I came here and looked at the way people were living, it seemed like everybody was living in one house. I wasn't used to that. I wasn't used to that Everybody living in one house. People's houses that you have all around you ... your yards and your gardens and everything.

And I was used to, when you met someone, to say, "Good morning, Mr. So and So ... Well, good morning there, So and So, and Brother So and So." And it seemed like when you met people, I don't know what you was lookin' at. And I told my aunt, I said "Well, Good Lord of Mercy, is this what you call living?" And I still really haven't gotten used to living in Philadelphia. Still, it's no big bain to me so far as I'm concerned. (Eliza Lee)

Customs and habits in Philadelphia were so different from the South. Here strangers didn't greet each other like they did down home. All the homes were stuck together. The jobs weren't all they were cut out to be. The stories coming back home contained such growing reports. Hopes and expectations were so high.

And many stories that have been told to me by some of the boys that had left Durham and had come back to visit ... They told me the beautiful parts. But when I came to Philadelphia, I found that much of it was not the truth. Some of them told me they had nice jobs and were doing jobs that when I came, I found they didn't have at all. Where they told me they were benners, they were janitors. And that was a disappointment. (David Amey)

People came with widely varying degrees of knowledge about the city. Many of them straight off the farm, with limited education, rural ways and little or no preparation for urban life, arrived totally ignorant of even the basics of how people lived, ate, dressed or acted. While others, who had spent time in the cities of the South, felt quite at home.

With her brothers away in the service, Minnie was forced to work to support the family. And with little hope of relief she ran away at the tender age of 16 and made her way to relatives in Philadelphia.

Well, all the people that knew would look at you and say, "Look at her. She's from the South," "She's a dummy," or say something like that. And the white people would look at you and tell you in a minute, "You're from down south," because, from your speech, your dialect. And then from the way you act. ... I had to get used to knowing how people ate up here. In my home, where I come from, it was like ... dinner was at 12 o'clock. Our break—

See NEWCOMERS Next Page
The Great Migration

Officers of the Armstrong Association (around 1925): the group later became the Philadelphia chapter of the Urban League

Newcomers

Continued from preceding page

fast, including eggs, bacon, white fish, and sometimes my mother would have a large meal of fish and some vegetables. And then dinner was beans, cornbread, and they didn't have much of anything else. They made those beans that would make some pancakes, waffles or something. So I was used to that way of eating.

So when I come up here they talk about dinner at night. That was dinner! That is in the middle of the day, when we eat our dinner. So I had to get adjusted to what they had for lunch and dinner at night. And many things were hard for me to get adjusted to... I didn't do much talking. Like my speech, which is none too good now... I was afraid to talk because I didn't know where to put the words.

(Minnie Whitney)

Looking back on the manner that public transportation, how to use a telephone, how to dress and deport oneself in public, to adjust to work routines determined by the clock to learn even how to address people — posed real challenges for many folks up from the South.

Yes, I remember them coming up. They come up in caravans and overalls, and you could tell they were from the country. They would gravitate to the black neighborhoods, which was South Street, from what I guess about 8th or 9th to Broad Street and Bainbridge and Pine and Lombard and Naudain and Rodoan. You'd find them all there. (Ralph Jones)

The South Street corridor had been the heart of black Philadelphia for a hundred years. Broad and South was like 12th Street and Seventh Avenue in Harlem, or Druid Hill Avenue in Baltimore. It was the one spot, no matter where you came from, that everyone knew. And it was to this section of town that migrants flocked. Dr. Duckerly would sign them up down South. So when they came here they would go to South Street and they would come up here with jobs, they had no place to stay. And that's where Tindley, my pastor, and other pastors and people prevailed upon the members of their congregations to rent out extra rooms in their homes. At that time, black families had a whole house. No apartments... a whole house... and usually they had extra rooms and they rented them out and charged nominal fees for it.

But these men would come here and make more money than they ever made in the South in a month and a half. And they paid pretty good. And some of them even paid lodging and boarding together and in the houses that they lived with prospered because they prospered too, you see. Many of them had the overlords staying in these rooms and subsequently went on to buy these rowhouses. (Ralph Jones)

Newly arrived Southerners would lease or buy a large house and then rent rooms to the interstate migrants... and so the small number of folks that they lived with prospered because they prospered too, you see. Many of them had the overlords staying in these rooms and subsequently went on to buy these rowhouses. (Ralph Jones)

The other boy said, "That old gal looks like she is full of eat's."

"Look here, Mr. White Boy. If your mother had a yeast cake before you was born, you'd been a better bred."

(Billy Coven, "Sisterette's Visit to the North," D.H., 1917)

Some of the newcomers were loud and boisterous in public. Dressed in their overalls and homespun clothes, many were altogether ignorant of the ways of the city. And many too, freed from the oppression of the South and full of illusions about the North being a land of freedom and promise, did things and behaved in ways that were considered inappropriate both by Philadelphia's native black population and by the white majority.

So what were they like in the eyes of the Philadelphians? Mrs. E. was industrial secretary for the Armstrong Association during the 1920s:

Well, the most of them were black in color, some of them were belligerent, some of them were mean. But the majority of them was "Yes, ma'am. No, ma'am."

And I would laugh because some of them were better than myself, calling me "Yes, ma'am" and "No, ma'am." And they were nice sort of Negroes. But they were desperate for a job. (Mrs. E.)

... Well, they did stand out. My grandmother, God rest her soul, she was a slave and unlettered. But she had her self-styled qualities, her Puritan qualities, and she saw some of these people come here.

At that time there was an aristocracy among blacks and middle class and what not that came way before them. You see, there was a well-established black population in Philadelphia. They looked the skids at these other people that came up. And my grandmother used to win every time she would say it. "These new niggers..." "New niggers..." and with contempt. If you could see the look on her face, you would say, "This be it."

And we kids would look at her and say, "What she mean? You know, we didn't know the full intent of that "new nigger." (Ralph Jones)

Philadelphia's native black population was noted for its culture and educational attainments. When the Great Migration began, the nation was being swept by a rising tide of racial segregation and Jim Crow. And quite naturally the "OPs" as the old black Philadelphia families were known, feared the loss of the small advantages they enjoyed and the further deterioration of their already-tenacious relations with the white world. And much of the blame for the growing discrimination took shape in their minds in the form of the rural "Joe Box."

In 1921, Sade Tanneh Mossell, born into one of Philadelphia's prominent Negro families, became the first black woman in America to earn a doctorate, for her survey of the living standards of 100 migrant families.

They found themselves thrown in their midst about 40,000 migrants, whose presence in such large numbers crumbled and stagnated the program. See NEWCOMERS After Cenotaph
Speaking Our History

Interviewing someone for an oral history project can be a fascinating and rewarding experience.

By CHARLES HARDY

Oral history is a method of gathering and preserving historical information in spoken form (the recording of people’s recollections for future use). It can be a richly rewarding experience for both the interviewer and the person interviewed.

It is an excellent means to get young people interested in history. Through interviewing relatives or neighbors, they can come to see, in a compelling and personal fashion, the historical dimension of all people’s lives.

To make the most out of your oral history project, here is a brief outline and a few rules of thumb:

1. Project Design: The first step is to decide the scope and content of your oral history project. What is the project’s purpose? Where will the oral history interviews be deposited after the project is finished? What will be the product or outcome of this project? A class report? A community or family history? A newspaper article? Whatever the product, remember to inform the people you interview. After all, you couldn’t have done it without them.

2. Research: The greater the preparation, the better the interview. The more you know about the period and subject you will be asking questions about, the more you will get from the interview. So do your homework in advance. A knowledgeable interviewer helps the interviewee to recall and to focus their answers, and enables you to ask the right questions. Prepare a questionnaire, blocking out the types of questions you are going to ask, and become familiar with it. Then leave it at home. Nothing can ruin an interview faster than reading off questions off a piece of paper.

3. Equipment: Use the best equipment and tapes you can afford. The better the quality of these, the more valuable and useful the recorded interview will be. Do not use tapes longer than 45 minutes a side. The longer ones have a greater tendency to jam or break, and they don’t last as long. It is better to use a microphone than the built-in mike on the recorder. If you must use the built-in mike, make sure it is positioned close to the interviewee. Nothing is more frustrating than to record a terrific interview and then be unable to hear what has been recorded.

4. Setting up the Interview: After you have decided whom you are going to interview, contact and explain to them the project: who you are, the purpose of the interview, the types of questions you will be asking them, and how you will use the interview. Remember, it is their lives they are sharing with you, so treat them with all the respect and consideration that is due. It is a good policy to visit the person once before the actual interview in order to: a) run over the procedure; b) allow them to see who you are; and c) get a better idea of what is expected. This is the time to ask about photographs, diaries, scrapbooks or other materials that might also be useful. Remember to keep this first visit short. You don’t want them to tell the stories you want to get on tape, because usually the first telling is the best.

5. The Interview: An oral history is an in-depth, not a conversation. The objective is to draw the person out with questions that are short, open-ended and to the point. There are a number of things to keep in mind.

   a) Length: Don’t go over an hour and a half. Oral history interviewing can be very tiring, especially for an older person. If you want to ask more questions, make arrangements to come back.

   b) Technical considerations: First, check your equipment and make sure it is working before you go. So many interviews have been lost because this was overlooked. Once there, do what you can to make the room you are recording in as quiet as possible. Turn off the television and radio; close the windows.

   c) Rapport: The best interviews come when the interviewee is comfortable and at ease. A good trick is to start the recorder while you are still talking informally. Don’t feel they’re being put “on the spot” when the actual questioning begins. Take your time and be informal.

4) Interviewing techniques: Much has been written on interviewing techniques. Here are some quick pointers: Start with questions about personal background, to help establish rapport and get their memories flowing; ask one question at a time, do not ask questions that can be answered by a yes or no; do not interrupt, but save questions that come to mind later in the interview; don’t be flustered by silence, for often the person is merely gathering their thoughts; avoid turning off the recorder for “off the record” information; and don’t challenge accounts you believe inaccurate.

   c) The Release Form: After the interview is complete, have the interviewee sign a release form. This gives you and others the right to use the contents of the interview and to place it on deposit. Forms can be very simple. Samples can be found in “Interpreting the People of Pennsylvania” or obtained from the Atwater Kent Museum.

6. Review: Completing the interview is only half the work. The next step is to listen back to the interview, within a day or two after the interview is done. This is the time to make an index of its contents so that you and others will know and be able to locate information in the interview; to fill out an interview form with basic information about the interviewer and interviewee; and some brief observations about what took place during the interview; to take notes on questions you would like to ask if you go back; and to grade yourself on your own interviewing techniques.

Charles Hardy is producer of the radio series, “Gone North: Tales of the Great Migration.”

A black Elks lodge ready to march; lodge

Picturing Our Past

Old photographs can make history of society — com

you'll find you tell you m

By MORRIS J. YOVEL

A ll of us have family pictures. Most often, we stuff them into a drawer or a closet and only rediscover them when we're looking for something else. Ordinarily, we don't give these old photographs much attention, but occasionally we look at them to recall fond moments, to recall friends and relatives no longer with us, to remember how we lived in times gone by, to revisit — if only in our minds — family homes and special places.

We know that our family pictures can make the past come alive for us, but do we know that they can tell an important historic story?

History books are full of pictures from the past. Civil War battles and civil rights marches sweep across their pages; generals and Indian chiefs stare solemnly out of their formal portraits; presidents are inaugurated and great leaders are buried. The pictures in our books depict important events and people. They help us understand the dignity of a Martin Luther King, the tragedy of war, the workings of our democratic system.

That's part of America, but there's more to history. It's the story of all of us, of our families as well as our leaders, of everyday life as well as great events. Our own pictures can help us tell a different part of the same story: how a grandfa

ther went to war, how a family moved from one part of the country to another, what it was like to live on a farm, how a city neighborhood looked.

This is also history. The eyes that meet ours when we look into an old photograph have a
Our History

were of great importance to black men in the 1920s

Individual portraits were also popular. Often a person posed with an object important to him. For blacks and whites alike, a new car has often been the occasion for picture-taking. Along the same lines is the personal photograph that includes the tools of the individual’s trade. A Renaissance astronomer might stand behind his telescope, a 20th-century jazz musician behind his saxophone. A musician’s photograph might be used for business purposes, to advertise an act or to distribute to fans. So too might the picture of an musical group. Inscriptions let us see who a band’s fans were.

Government agencies also took photographs for a variety of reasons. Licenses might carry a photograph for security or identification purposes; public works projects might be documented; the uses to which streets were being put or the need for repairs might be recorded.

We can read such photos in ways that their original creators might not have intended. We can see what kinds of jobs people held, the street on which they lived, the way they played. We can find blacks restricted to jobs as unskilled or service workers, or the dirtiest and most dangerous work sites. We find them in segregated neighborhoods.

The fellowship of the lodge itself was — and remains — special. Membership conferred status. The lodge initiated or enrolled a man who — and lodges were male, not female activities — made clear his pride in belonging to the group. Excluded by racism from many trades, occupations and achievements, blacks created their own fraternal societies, clubs and teams. The expressions we see on the faces of lodge members in these old group portraits show us how valued the fellowship of these groups was. At the same time, these old photos remind us of the nation’s history of segregation and racial exclusion.

Family of Richard MacIntyre, who came from Wilmington, N.C., to Philadelphia in 1917; he worked for Miller Storage Co. on North Broad Street as a furniture mover
Newcomers
Continued from Before Centerfold

...of Negro life. The processes of assimilation which the colored cit-izens are carrying on cannot immediately bring back the pendulum which has swung to a position of depressed social, economic and moral life.

Only gradually, as the weights of ignorance, lack of culture and in-creased racial prejudice, aroused by the white people against the whole Negro citizenry as a result of the tremendous increase in the size of the Negro population, are removed, will the pendulum return to normal...

Certainly none of us can deny that the migration retarded the steady march of progress of the colored people in Philadelphia. (Sadie Tan-ner Mossell)

But the old Philadelphia Negro, he was chauvinist as he could be, and they were reluctant to accept this other Negro ...They just kept them in their place. Philadelphia Negroes were the worst in the country as far as that's concerned. If your parents weren't born here, you were just out. (John Summers)

Dissimulation struck many when they found that much of Philadel-phia, just like the South, was strictly Jim Crow. There had been a state equal rights bill passed in 1887 but that was never enforced.

As a young man, Charles Vance came to Philadelphia in 1921 in search of his father.

Well, my first impressions were pretty bad for a while. They always talkin' about what the South was doin', what the South was doin'. And I say now, what the South is doin', it's true, it's no good. In Philadelphia you have restaurants here you couldn't go in and eat. There were beer gar-dens here out there in Strawberry Mansion. You go in there and buy a glass of beer and soon as you drink it they throw the glass in the trash. You see the people don't realize that, but it's true. The only difference I no-ticed was that they didn't bother you. But they didn't care for you. (Charles Vance)

Downtown, no hotel would lodge or restaurant serve a black. Theaters were segregated by section. There were certain neighborhoods, like Grays Perry, that if you had any sense at all, you just stayed clear of. Rents were consistently higher that they were for other groups. Traders open to black craftsmen in the South refused admittance here.

Down in the South, we were humiliated and persecuted. We weren't allowed to do anything. We weren't allowed to have an ambition in the South.

And, of course, when those people came up here, they had those same things in their minds that I had when we crossed the Mason-Dixon Line: that we would get "our justice." That's the way they said it. And when they didn't get that, they resented it ...

...But you see, since they did not have scholastic training and since they did not have religious upbringing — some of them came right from the farms, you know — that's all they knew was that rugged, rustic life, and, of course, they thought they could be just embraced right in the city, just coming from the farm with out refurbishing themselves at all. And when they didn't get that, they resented it. You see. And that's what gave the impression that they were this and they were that, and they wasn't desirable and so on.

But I thought that a person would stand on their own record, on their own personality. I didn't think that they had to be corruped and everybody put into one basket and pushed aside like the white people did. Because anybody that was black, they figured all of us were the same way. (William Brown)

As was usual at the time, blacks were the only group in the country judged by the lowest representatives of their race, and it was "Sinners" and George Washington Jefferson Madison Jones, "the rough, exuberant, shiftless, ignorant, gin-drinking, pool-playing Joe Joe," who represented the Southern black in the popular imagination.

In the coming decades, the thousand of Southerners pouring into the city would transform Philadelphia economically and socially. It was the newcomers who would buy homes in West Philadelphia and make North Philadelphia the third-largest black community in the country. They would form the population base large enough to support new black businesses; they would fight the city's political establishment and help break the Republican machine that had run Philadelphia since the 1830s, and they would be among the leaders in the overthrow of Jim Crow in the city.

The great majority of people who made the trip north led quiet and private lives. And in all, most did prefer life in the city to the farm. We just liked the city. We liked the city. Brother-in-law was telling me a joke. He was ridin' around in Philadelphia and there was a house there and a woman standing in the door we knew'd. Come up from our home. And my sister said, 'That's Aunt Mano standing in the door there.'

It was on Christian Street. So he backed his car back and was talking to Maude and said, 'How you like it here?'

And she said, 'Oh, Francis, fine!' Francis said, 'Well, why don't you come out to see me sometimes?'

'No, you live way out in the country.'

She was born there on a tobacco farm, wheat farm. Yeah, she was born way, way, way out the city and she actually got married, got married, had kids, and she come to Philadelphia and we were all to pieces about Philadelphia.

"No, Frank. I can't come out to see you. You live far out in the country," she says. 'It's too dark out there. Too dark." (James Plunkett)

Even a telephone was new to people just up from the farms.

The New Philadelphia
Population Growth by Blacks and Foreign-Born Immigrants, 1870-1920

In the Classroom
1. Journal Entry: Have the students write the impressions of what it would have been like if they had had a "newcomer" to Philadelphia in the 1920s. Ask them to write their observations and comments about the newcomers in the "big city." Then have them write a paragraph comparing how the city growing of Philadelphia's black population to the growth of the different immigrant groups represented in the table. Then have them write a paragraph or two on how similar or different the Southern blacks' migration experience was to that of the European immigrants coming to Philadelphia in the early 20th century.

2. For Research and Discussion: a. Using the statistics in the above chart on the growth of black and foreign-born groups for Philadelphia's population between 1870 and 1930, have the students make a bar graph (using different colors for each group) showing this particular population growth. On the back of the graph, have the students write a paragraph comparing the growth of Philadelphia's black population to the growth of the different immigrant groups represented in the table. Then have them write a paragraph or two on how similar or different the Southern blacks' migration experience was to that of the European immigrants coming to Philadelphia in the early 20th century.

b. Using the information presented in the narrative text and the oral histories about what it was like for Southern blacks to be "newcomers" to Philadelphia in the 1920s, have the students write an open letter to the Philadelphia Tribune offering advice to Southern blacks who have recently migrated to the city.
Domestic Work

Domestic work was the backbone of Philadelphia’s black economy. In 1920, over 86 percent of all black women were employed as maids.

Our family worked for one family of people in Columbus, S.C., for about 28 years. My mother was the first one to work there, and after I got old enough, I worked there. That same girl, my daughter there, I worked long enough till she got big enough to work.

And I heard so many people on my side goin’ to Philadelphia. Goin’ to Philadelphia. So I got a notion to go to Philadelphia, too. So I told her one day, I said, “Miss Nims, I’m goin’ to Philadelphia.”

“Oh, Lilly. Those Yankees don’t want you up there.”

I said, “I goin’ to find out for myself.”

And I did. 1925 to 1926 I came to Philadelphia. And I been workin’ all of my days up here. Rainin’ my family— a mother of nine and raised them all. Now I got so many grandsons and great-grandsons I can’t count them all. But you know when you put God to your program, He makes a way for you. You can’t see that way. But He always has a ram in the bush. Somebody goin’ to come and do something for you. Right? So I don’t feel uneasy now. I don’t care when my time comes and I go and meet the Lord because that’s what I’m workin’ for.

(Lilly McKnight)

Thousands of women, married and single, with children and without, made the trip north during the Great Migration. They were widows, daughters, young women eager to help support their families back home. And for most of them, the only work available — and the work they were most familiar with, outside farming — was housework.

Today it is difficult to imagine just how basic and important a part of life servants were before the modern age of electric ranges, dishwashers, laundry machines, mops and all the other household conveniences.

Finding work was never a problem. There was always a shortage of women willing to do housework, so jobs were plentiful. During the early decades of this century, white women were moving into jobs opening in sales, industry and clerical positions, leaving housework more and more to women of color.

In 1920 black women were 5 percent of all women over the age of 10, 13 percent of all women wage earners, 54 percent of all servants and 78 percent of all laundresses. The demand was great, requirements minimal. And women poured in from the South, many of them with little knowledge of the city, as Lilly McKnight remembers:

“Lil’s. Didn’t know a thing about Philadelphia. When I got here, I wished I had stayed in the South, because everything was so different. But I went to the unemployment office, and they sent me on a job. Twelve dollars a week. I didn’t bring my children up. I left my children and my sisters in the South. But I worked and worked till I got every one of them up here.

And when I got here I didn’t get but $12 a week. I couldn’t stay down there and made $2 a week and got by as good. But you like to spread out and see what’s goin’ on in the other part of the world.” (Lilly McKnight)

So what was it like to work as a domestic in the city of Philadelphia?

Basically there used to be a term called working “in service,” where you would, what they call “sleep in,” and you would probably have a half a day off, one day a week. Other than that you stayed on the job. You slept in, ate in, everything. If you were a man, maybe you would be a butler, houseman and chauffeur. The woman would cook and wash, iron and clean. You never had any time to yourself. (George Madison)

Domestic work was the backbone of the black economy. And in 1920, just to give an example of one year, over 86 percent of all black women employed in Philadelphia were doing it. Though day work was becoming more and more popular, live-in service was still the greatest demand. Most families had only one live-in maid. She did the housekeeping, cooked, took care of the kids, helped take care of the children... did everything but the laundry, which was usually sent out or saved for a washerwoman who came in on Thursdays.

Bessie Yancey came north to help support her family after her father hurt his back lifting railroad ties. She arrived in the city in 1914 and obtained work as a maid.

I started work with a dollar and a half a week. And I was inexperienced and thought that was a lot of money for a greenhorn like me that was coming up from the country. And the experienced people didn’t get too much more than that. If they got $10 a week they was doin’ well. In those days you could live on it. Could dress yourself and you could pay your room rent, and ah, if they wanted to... were smart enough, could have a few pennies left over. (Bessie Yancey)

Coming from a large family, you learned housework while at home, often working with mothers in the “big house” as children. So by the time you arrived in the North you had experience. But Northern ways could be quite different.

Mamie Whitney ran away from home in 1917 to escape from working in the fields. Soon after arriving she took a private position, and on her first day on the job she was told to cook an eggplant. Never having seen one before, she began to boil it when the mistress of the house discovered her mistake.

And some of those things was hard for me to get adjusted to. I didn’t know how to cook. I knew how to cook the Southern way. So she said, “If you’re willing to learn, I’ll teach you.”

So she taught me. But there were so many things that stood out, that they knew I was from the country. Because Mrs. Stroganoff, she told me like this: “I knew you were from the South, but don’t worry about it.”

She said, “I like to get little greenhorns,” she said. “Then I can learn them my way and they’re easy to train.”

I said, “Well, I don’t know how to eat the Jewish foods.” But I found out. There were a lots of times I was surprised at that food, and I had to be accustomed to it. So many things I had to get adjusted to. (Mamie Whitney)

Beulah Collins was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she in all likelihood would have remained had her husband died in the influenza epidemic of 1918, leaving her with child. Like so many others like her, she took work as a live-in maid with a family in a large house on Lincoln Drive.

Well, I was young and I could get around. I hadn’t considered it so hard because I had come from the country where it was hard, and I just felt like I had fallen in luck. And I got up there and I had my baby, and we’d work during the day. These friends of mine who worked for her sister, we had clubs that we went to. I was young and I enjoyed myself. Yeah, life was pretty easy. (Beulah Collins)

See DOMESTIC Next Page
Domestic

Continued from Proceeding Page.

Compared to work on the farm, domestic work was not as a rule terribly difficult. Most housewives adjusted to it as to keep servants just too unhappy. Housewives wanted to keep a good maid. It was expensive and time-consuming to train someone new, and the emotional trauma involved in accepting a new maid into the family could be great. Even so, housework did not pay well, as Beulah remembers:

"Oh boy, that's sayin' somethin' now. She paid me $13 a week. A week! Won't forget that. I think she gave me a little bit, but I... she started me at $13.

Well, I made myself satisfied because I had just come from the country where we weren't getting nothin'. And I had this child to take care of. (Beulah Collins)

Though wages were greater than in the South, the higher cost of living offset much of the gain. And on the average, black women made about one-half of their white counterparts. Still, many were able to save enough to send something home or to take care of their children living elsewhere in the city. What is amazing, in retrospect, is that wages were not a point of dispute.

But then, these women were from the South. Not only were they used to a lower standard of living, but it was a life of isolation, in which you lived in the midst of a family. Close attachments to the family were often developed - most of the women we talked to still retain affection for most of their employers - and though a bad placement put you at the mercy of every whim and demand of the "Mrs.," these Southern women were also generally inclined to accept their lot in life.

Well, I had it pretty good because I always, I always knew how to work. With all this new work, you can get a job. And they like you and you like them. They like somebody to do that kind, a little bit of menial work. They don't want any fuss about complaints. I was treated just fine by the people I worked for up here. Everybody liked Sally. (Lilly McKnight) Most of all, all the women were temperamentally fit for domestic work.

There is a certain type of personality that can take that type of housework. I couldn't. It was sort of dehumanizing. Because you are not actually a human being. You are a piece of furniture. They would say anything to you and do anything in front of you, and you were not supposed to notice it. (George Madison)

That's why I say things were very, very bad when I came to Philadelphia. Because they say going up north, well, you feel you are going to something greater. I'm going up north where the money falls from the sky.

But when you get to Philadelphia you find it different. It was very much against the kind of woman in the South. The kind of housework in Philadelphia you wash the windows, you wash the walls... you wash everything that you didn't just go in there like people going in there and you work from 8 to 4 from 9 to 5. You made the clothes. You did everything that you didn't just go in there like people going in there and you work from 8 to 4 from 9 to 5. You made the clothes. You did everything that they didn't want you to do. You and you were working all the time you were there. (Fannie Hutchison)

Many women preferred going to laundry to live-in domestic service; by working at home, they could stay with their children.

I felt like this: I don't mind working, but I don't like to be droved. When you're driving me and you're going to tell me after I done worked and I'm tired now and I feel that's enough and you're going to come back and find the other half of the house for me to clean and another big tub of clothes to wash, so I felt that was just like my grandmother had told me. Because sometimes she said she would work and work and work and then she had figured that the day was ended, and she said the "Mrs." would go and find more and she would be working till late in the night,

So I felt depressed because I felt like she was driving me. She wouldn't say, "Will you do it?" ... "You WILL do it." It was like a demand, and I didn't like it, because after I left home and got out from under the rules of, like they say, slavery, because I'm a second generation in from slaves, I come here to Philadelphia, I felt it more when they... well, just the same as I felt it in the South. (Minnie Whitney)

In Philadelphia they worked you harder than in the South. Servants were more expensive, the pace of life faster, the demands on workers and the intimacy of people less. Day work could be especially grueling, as there was no personal bond built from living together, and housewives would attempt to exact every last ounce of work out of their undereared servants.

And what were the options for women who were temperamentally or otherwise distanced from housework?

We heard it was great opportuni ties for blacks, and we didn't find it like we had heard it when we came. Jobs were menial jobs. And yes, I could get a job in someone's kitchen, but I didn't want that. I wasn't educated for that. So I didn't accept that. I was a governess for a while. And that's as far down as I went. (Ursella Hillaire)

It was not uncommon to find women with college degrees, who had taught school in the South, employed as maids or washwomen. The only Philadelphia schools blacks could teach in were the all-black elementary schools, and these had long waiting lists. Black businesses were few and employment hard to obtain. Jobs in sales, in clerical positions, and in many professions would not employ black women until the 1980s, and even then only in token form.

The principal alternative to domestic work was "public work," doing much the same chores as they did in people's homes, but in office buildings, laundries or stores. They might work as maids, cleaners, elevator operators and waitresses, with some as stock girls, wrappers, porters and setters, really any sort of menial job in which they did not come in contact with the public. There was some factory work available, too, but for most it was no option at all.

I went to a factory once to work and I stayed there for about three days. The crowd was too rough. Cursing and swearing in your face all day long, and I couldn't be bothered with those kind of people. I wasn't brought up like that. (Lilly McKnight)

Now, I don't know, because I'm a domestic worker. I can't stand crowds. When I came here, I had an aunt that was working in the tobacco factory.

No way in the world I would work in the tobacco factory. I visit her a couple of times, and the smell in that tobacco factory... just no way I would work in it. I wouldn't rather take my laundry home and do it or go into a white woman's home and clean basements or something other than do laundry than all that stink in the tobacco factory.

And in the factories, perhaps, the pay is better. I don't know. I can't tell because I'm not a, I'm just not a mix en. I never did any public work. I love to cook. I love to laudry. I just love... I just love to be at home. (Ella Lee)

It's what you get used to. I was bet ter brought up. I couldn't work in a place like that. It just didn't suit me.

You know what suits you and what doesn't suit you, don't you? You want to be satisfied with what you do, right? (Lilly McKnight)

To Ella, Beulah, Lilly and others like them, the trials of domestic work were still preferable to labor in certain factories. They grew up on the farm, surrounded by family. Domestic work was more familiar to them, wasn't as rough, noisy, hurried or regimented. Factory work, even with the possibility of better wages and more free time, was just too great a leap to make.

But there were women who preferred work in the factories. Especially during the war, when wages were high and opportunities greater, black women deserted the homes in favor of industrial employment. But with few exceptions the wages were low - less than those paid to white women doing the same work. They were treated poorly and confined to the worst machines and least desirable occupations. Philadelphia's tobacco factories had employed black women for decades in the stripping and stemming of the tobacco leaves.

But in the tobacco factory, that was where it was hard. And they all colored in there. And they had you, one dressing room for all these women to go in there and, you know, get washed up and get ready to...
"I came here to Philadelphia because people said it was better, so much better living in the North than it was in the South. But so far as I am concerned, you have got to work like a dog to have anything, anywhere you go.

Ella Lee

And I worked in a few places. I didn't think of all the names of all the places I worked. And lots of times, you know, work gets short and you get laid off. You find another job before you know you back there. And so we just go on there. (Martha Mathis)

And she reminds me too. I was ironing, and the lady said to me...

The storm came... it was lightnings. She said, "Willie. You through?"

"I told her, "No, ma'am. I'm not through." I told her, "I don't work when it's lightning — for nobody! I'll finish and go home when I'm finished." "What I told her. She didn't bother me. Ms. Mathis, "I don't work when it's lightning for nobody." I told her that too. I said, "That's why I didn't work in the factory. That's why I'm not in a factory. I want to work.

I knew I could get another day's work, you see. I could get day's work and a half."

Another reason Willa preferred day work was that it enabled her to be with her family in the evenings.

For women like Willa, the possibility of day work was not possible. The only time they had off was Saturday and Sunday, and even then, it was rare for them to have any other Sunday. So how did you meet other folks? Go courting? Manage a family life?

Department of Public Safety — Bureau of Elevator Inspection

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Elevator Operator's License

Izall Coburn

having been duly examined and having qualified in accordance with the Ordinance of Councils, dated April 19th, 1917, is hereby licensed to operate a Passenger Elevator for one year from date.

Harold A. Grove, C.M.

Chief

PHILADELPHIA

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 1915: E-15

THE GREAT MIGRATION

4. For Research and Discussion: Have the students interview a couple of male and female family members (grandparents, mother, aunt, cousins) or friends of the family who had work experience outside of the home. Make sure the students interview individuals from different age groups so that they have an opportunity to compare generational differences, if any.

The students should inquire about the types of jobs they had, where they worked, how they got to work, how satisfied they were with their work experience, and whether or not they felt discriminated against. Have the students bring this information to class for discussion.

Make a list on the blackboard for the students' survey findings for each category of questions. Ask the students if they can draw any generalizations from their survey responses.

In the Classroom

1. Journal Entry

For the girls: It's 1919, and you are a black waitress at a local restaurant.

You have just been replaced and demoted to a position working at the basement counter of the restaurant.

Write about your feeling concerning this change in your work experience. Also comment on what you might do about this situation.

For the boys: It's 1919, and World War I has just ended. You, a black employee, are working at a local manufacturing company and have been told that you will lose your job to a returning veteran.

Write about your feelings concerning this change in your work experience. Also comment on what you might do about this situation.

2. Define the following words used in this program:

- Domestic: standard of living
- Public work: indiscriminately

Now you are recording this, and I hope you like something read it. Now my grandfather and grandmother were slaves. Both of them were slaves. And I have plowed many a furrow in the state of Georgia. I have worked. I know what work is and I know what not work is.

And I know, honey, if you don't work, you ain't gonna have nothin' unless you steal. I know a lot. And I have worked just as hard here in the state of Pennsylvania as I worked in Georgia. Yes, I came here, and when I came here I find my family, some of them here. And some of them here died just as poor as some of them died in Georgia. Some of them died here with nothing, just like some of them died in Georgia... and in Florida. That's true. (Ella Lee)
Men's Work

For a black man, the only jobs available were the unskilled, backbreaking work of a laborer. This was true even for black men who had training in skilled professions.

Well, the South was always very ... a part of it — I don't say all of it — but the state I was born in, South Carolina, there wasn't much enterprise there — factories and stuff like that. It was more of farmers' country. Raised cotton and corn and stuff like that. And therefore the wages was practically nothin'. And when the war broke out, why, the people left there coming up here, looking for work in the war plants, and that's what brought me up here. (Harvey Wilson)

The migration to Philadelphia did not begin in the summer of 1916, when the first trainload of black laborers was brought up by the Pennsylvania Railroad. There had been a steady stream coming for decades. Some 44,000 arrived between 1890 and 1910 as part of the "advance guard.

Most of the jobs back then were of two kinds: "service" and as unskilled laborers. The service jobs — as porters, servants, waiters, barbers — had traditionally been black folks' work.

But with the rise of Jim Crow during the early years of this century, blacks were being driven out by the Italians, Portuguese and other immigrant groups.

Now a black man with broad shoulders and strong arms could always find work hoeing, digging and toting for the street railways, railroads, steel mills and on the waterfront, where great numbers of strong, unskilled laborers were required. And many of the men employed by the Philadelphia Mass Transit Co., Atlantic Refining, Franklin Sugar and others were either recruited in, or recently up from the South.

Rev. Charles Albert Tindley's first job upon his arrival in Philadelphia was as a hod carrier.

Some even treated their black workers with some sense of justice. By 1910 the Midvale Steel plant in the Nicetown section of the city employed some 800 to 1,000 men, paid them wages equal to their white counterparts and allowed upward advancement.

But before the war, companies like Midvale were in a small minority. Blacks were still excluded from most forms of industrial employment until the curtailment of immigration from Europe at the outbreak of the war forced employers to turn south for their workers.

Between July 1916 and January 1917, the Pennsylvania Railroad would bring 12,000 men north on free transportation to work for the railroad. Some 3,000 of them came to Philadelphia. The men were put up in makeshift labor camps: tents and converted boxcars supplied with cots and separate facilities with showers and toilets.

Now we stepped at a place at the railroad that was like a shanty where the train ended up, and I told you, they had done fixed food and everything, you know, that for us, so you was workin' on the railroad then.

Some of the boys that come to Philadelphia and went around and got acquainted with some people, and they tell us when they come back and say why are we sleepin' there and telling how good Philly was. So I decided I would try Philly out. So they, the people that brought us up here, they didn't mind me. They didn't mind you leaving.

You could leave anytime you want. So I worked about a week and then decided to move to Philadelphia. (Ernest Grey)

And indeed, why live in a tent and do backbreaking work, when only miles away lay the big city? Jobs were plentiful — in hotels, in private service and especially in the city's heavy industries.

As did others like him, Mr. Grey stayed a week, received his first paycheck, and then made his way to the city, putting up at a boarding house on 16th and Lombard streets. The next day he and a friend made their way across the river to Camden, where they got jobs with the Campbell Soup Co.

The railroad soon discontinued its experiment in free transportation. But by then the migration was in full flow. In August 1918, 850 rejections by Philadelphia area industries were placed for 21,000 men. Of that number, 186,000 were for Negroes to be used in unskilled labor.

William Fields worked as a waiter in Dallas, Texas, when the railroad's labor agent came to town. He came here on the free transportation in the summer of 1917.

After the summer hotel season ended, he hired on as a porter at Strawberry Hill. But the $11 a week paid there was less than he had been making in Dallas. So he headed out to the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Eddystone to work in the milling shop. That lasted until Thanksgiving, when began one of the worst winters in the city's history.

It snowed from Thanksgiving till March, every night and every day. It sure did ... it was rough. I really cut my fingers and toes froze, because I was just jobbing around, and when one day they had teams, you know, and he was carrying them from Delaware Avenue out to 6th Street. That's the day I got my hands and toes frozen.

And I went ... I really don't have the same weather I've had some winters. We haven't had one like that since then, like that one. (William Fields)

Winter eventually passed, and with the coming of spring, the flood of migrants would reach its peak, some 12,000 people pouring into the city between April and June, most of them heading for work in the city's industries.

Father was a hammer shop foreman at Midvale. Every Sunday morning before church somebody would come to the house, bringing a brother, a cousin, a relative, a friend, who had just come from the South to Philadelphia to get a job which had actually started in some firms immediately after the start of World War I.

They were just ordinary people from the farms — people who were farmers or worked farm work. Most of them were people with little education. But at that time most jobs in mills — especially in steel mills and plants of that type — didn't require any education at all. It wasn't necessary. Just brute strength, so that it wasn't necessary to be able to read or write.

And these were surplus workers who at the slightest slackening of activity would be the first to be laid off. And they never worried about additional workers to any extent because there would always be men outside the employment office inquiring about jobs. (Jack Jones)

Business was booming and production churning at a frantic pace. Negroes came north to visit his brother in the fall of 1917, ended up staying the winter, and hired on at the Midvale plant in Nicetown.

And you see, it was so dangerous, people were getting killed just like that. Yeah, it was dangerous. Fallin' into those big raths where they would

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**Men**

Continued from Preceding Page

cool that, cool those barreled to a gun. They had an oil well. That’s what they cooled them in. They didn’t cool them in water. They cooled them in oil, and sometimes you see just a blue light. That’s where a man had slipped and fallen over into that thing. (Clap.) Didn’t see his body no more. That’s just how they died. (Hughesey Childs)

The war industries, employing thousands, allowed blacks to break into manufacturing and mechanical jobs not previously considered within the range of their activities — and not just into unskilled positions. They were employed as crane operators at Baldwin’s Eddystone plant, as sugar foremen at Campbell Soup, as inspectors and crew foremen at Hog Island.

For the common laborer, wages were at an all-time high. Things were looking pretty good all round. And then came the end of the war.

Well, most of the fellows, well, they got good jobs during the war. Steel plants, defense plants. They got good jobs. Course, after the war they didn’t get good jobs. They laid ‘em off.

They lost their jobs, yeah. Some of them went back home. Yeah. Any good jobs after the war was over, you get laid off. Course, a lot of those fel-lows come back … You had to give them their jobs back.

I know a lot of boys from my home had good jobs at the steel plant, Midvale Steel. They all lost their jobs because after the war was over, they boys come back, they all want their jobs back and they had to give ‘em their jobs back …

You couldn’t do nothin’. The jobs were meant to fight for the country, and if you didn’t get killed and come back, then they entitled to have their jobs back. (James Plunkett)

Now I was there when the Armistice was signed. And you probably know with your Philadelphia history that immediately after the Armistice, when all the war business shut down and there was a period of very little work and jobs were scarce and a lot of competition by the Negroes of West Philadelphia and North Philadelphia against the whites, the Italians particularly in South Philadelphia.

And there were some nasty riots in Philadelphia during that period. And where we were located, we could look over the Walnut Street bridges and the Chestnut Street bridges from West Philadelphia. And there were from the time we could get to work at 7 in the morning. We could see whites chasing Negroes back over to West Philadelphia and Negroes streaming on back down into South Philadelphia. (Milo Manley)

The economy, of course, would recover. As the nation entered the boom times of the Roaring Twenties, the Great Migrating heated up again, peaking for the decade between the fall of 1922 and 1923. But this time, with the return to “normalcy,” jobs for blacks were once again confined to the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.

Well, you see, I was a railroad man in the South. That was my job. When came here, I had no job no no no no no. You couldn’t even get a job in the railroad shops here. When I come here, all that was done by whites. No color.

So I had to take what I could get. And I didn’t make no money. I had to work for a whole lot less here than I did in the South. I can’t make the work I was doing then, I got paid for it.

And I come up here and that was out. And I never … I stayed up here long enough to get broke and was ashamed to go back South. I would’veoro and explained his qualifications. I wouldn’t have had nothin’, because I didn’t make nothin’.

But I don’t think I made a mistake I made in my younger life. One mistake I made. If I had stayed in the South I think I would’ve been better off. Yeah, far better off. People in the South today is much better off than the people up here. (Harvey Wilson)

The men coming north included skilled artisans and mechanics, men with educations and professions. And though the wages made feeding a blast furnace in a steel mill could be a step up for someone fresh off the farm, for a baker, carpenter or a plumber, for an insurance salesman or a clerk, the lack of opportunities could be heartbreaking.

Black craftsmen and professionals were excluded from most of the skilled trades, from white-collar occupations, from skilled positions in industry, business and government.

Upon his arrival in the city Mr. Brown, interested in pursuing a career in real estate, approached a realtor and explained his qualifications.

And he said to me, “What a pity.”

I said, “Sir?”

He said, “Never mind.”

Then he said to me he was glad he had the opportunity to talk to me and that he gave a new opening like that at this particular time, but he would take my name and address and so forth. But he said to me, “Now, we do have an opening for a janitor and if you know anybody that you would recommend, whether you recommended to us, we would accept because we know that you would not recommend anybody that was not worthwhile.”

And I thanked him and walked out.

And I pored over that conversation and I explained it to a person that I knew there in Philadelphia, and he said to me, “You know, he was just offering you a job, a mop and broom. That’s all he was doing.”

And I came to the realization that was exactly what he was doing. So I felt then that the opportunities that they told me would be available to me before I left the South, it wasn’t so.

I found out my consternation that the white man up north was perfectly satisfied to ride with you on the subway cars, on the elevated trains and sit by the side of you, but when he got up to go where he had to go, he got on his horse case and went to his office. But when you got up, you went to a mop and broom, because there was no office for you to go to up here.

So that is the difference. I found out that it was the same thing, only just painted with different colors. It was the same degree of segregation and denial of privileges that we thought we were going to enjoy when we came north. (Mr. Brown)

Leon Grimes worked at Horn & Hardart:

They would come in and bring a young white boy, maybe just your age, or someone right along with you, where age is concerned, and I would be what they call the head kitchen man, which was actually the head cook. They wouldn’t say you was the head cook because I guess they didn’t want to recognize you, but I was really a head cook and could do anything in the whole firm, no matter what it was as far as cooking and all the things in the kitchen.

Anyhow, they bring the white boy to me. … Many times I seen this happen. They bring him to me and say, “Grimes. We got a boy here we want you to train.”

I say, “All right.”

“Show him the ropes.”

I say, “All right.”

And so sometimes I train the boy, and to make a long story short, before you know it, he was a manager over me and I been there all my life.

One time I protested too much and almost got fired. I was scared too, because I had children, I had a wife and two children by that time. And they would tell me I wanted a better job, that I got a family I got to get a promotion. They said, “What you want?”

I said, “I can be a manager.” Said, “We been around this company many years.” I said, “I can manage something like that.”

They cut me off. They didn’t want to hear that. “Well, Grimes,” he said, “We’ll see what we can do.”

Well, I never did hear no more from them. (Leon Grimes)

“Nope, I won’t scab, but I ain’t no joiner kind of fellow,” said Jake. “I ain’t no white folks’ nigger, and I ain’t no poor whites’ fool. When I longhorsed in Philly, I was a good union man. But when I made New

\*las\*...
A black labor crew at Hog Island in 1917: some blacks became foremen and inspectors at the shipyard

Photo Courtesy of Ahward Kent Museum

In the Classroom

1. Journal Entry: Have the students look at the photographs in this section. Ask them to write about what it would have been like to do the different types of jobs represented in each of the photographs.

2. Define the following words used in this program:
   - indiscriminate
   - itinerant
   - agitation
   - expendable

3. For Research Discussion: Simulation on Economic Competition of Jobs and Cultural Differences. (Note: Have the students do this activity before they read the section.)
   a. Divide the class into three groups. One group wears green ribbons, a second group wears red ribbons, and a third group wears blue ribbons.
   b. Give only the green group a board game to play and some cookies for another appropriate activity for their age group, and ask the other two groups to stand and watch for 10 minutes.
   c. Take away the games and cookies from the green group and give them to the red group, giving the green group join the blue group waiting for 10 minutes.
   d. Now take some of the green members' privileges away and give them to a few of the blue members for about five minutes.
   e. Have the students take off their ribbons and bring the class back together for a discussion of what took place in the simulation.
   f. Ask the members of each group to tell how they felt during the simulation. Ask them to identify their good feelings and bad feelings about the experience. Ask the students if they felt an injustice was done to the blue group and what should or could have been done about it.

Men

Continued from Preceding Page

York I done founds out that they gives the colored mens the worst plees and holds the best o' them jobs for the Irishmen.

"No, pardon, keep you' card. I take the best I kin get as I goes mah way. But I tell you, things ain't all lovely between white and black in this hesh Gawd's own country.

"But it ain't decent to scab," said Juke.

"Decent mah black moon!" shouted Zeddy. "I'll scab through hell to make mah livin. Scab job of open shop or union all on the same jobs to me.

"White mens don't nigger in them unions nohow. Ain't you a good carpenter? And ain't I a good blacksmith? But kin we get a look-in on our trade heah in this white mans' city? Ain't white mens done scabbed niggers out all the jobs they useed hold down heah in this city? Waiter, bootblack and barber shop? — I got to live and I'll scab through hell to live. (Home to Harlem) by Claude McKay, 1929"

Before the war, work on Philadelphia's waterfront had paid poorly and been subject to chronic under-employment and unemployment. Because of the low wages and the irregular and heavy work, by 1913 over half the city's 4,000 longshoremen were black, some 60 percent of them up from the South.

Through a series of strikes and organizing efforts, a chapter of the radical union, the International Workers of the World, gained control of the waterfront under the leadership of Benjamin Fletcher, a Philadelphia-born black man.

Local 8 of the Marine Transport Workers of Philadelphia rotated black and white chairmanship on a monthly basis, it purposefully integrated its social functions and work crews and became a national model of racial cooperation and harmony. The "Wobblies" (IWW) maintained control of the waterfront until 1922 when a walkout, broken by black strikebreakers, ended the brief reign of Philadelphia's most famous integrated union.

Most of Philadelphia's industries were virulently opposed to the unionization of their employees. Its clothing and garment mills were the last in a major Northern city to join the union.

By the first decade of the 20th century, Philadelphia manufacturers were importing colored men and women to break strikes in their shops and plants. They were also hired before the war as part of a strategy employed by companies to divide their workers along racial and ethnic lines, and thus prevent them from organizing: a technique once used effectively on the Philadelphia waterfront.

In part as a result of such practices, Northern labor unions — Philadelphia's included — were hostile to black workers and, in general, refused them admittance. White laborers were unwilling to work beside Negro employees; employers were reluctant to hire them and quickly dismissed them upon objections by their white workers. So most blacks stayed away from the unions, and with good reason.

After I had established my own record as a contractor here, I was in competition with white men working, and I think they resented that. And one of the men told me why didn't I join the paperhanger and painters' union? And I thought it over. He gave me an application form, and I discussed it with some of my other workers, especially the concrete or cement man. And he said to me, "Din't you join no union," he said, "because if you do you'll never get work."

He said, "Because if you join the union, you will have to agree to union terms and declare that you are going to follow all the union terms and obligations. And that means that you wouldn't be able to take a job and work for less than union wages. And colored people couldn't pay union wages. And white man wouldn't pay you union wages when he could get a white man to do the same job."

He said, "And if you take that, you would never get a union job because as soon as you took a job for a colored client, you would be regarded as a scab, because you couldn't get union wages from them 'cause they were poor people and they had homes and needed some work done, but they couldn't pay union wages. So you stay out of the union."

And I found out was good advice, because I could do work for people just by the strength of, by the strength of telling one person would tell another: just by word of mouth. (William Brown)

No, Philadelphia wasn't all it was cracked up to be. There was a ceiling of unskilled jobs that few blacks were able to break through. Last hired, first fired was a devastating reality.

But wages in Philadelphia's, as in other Northern industries, were fairly high. The income of the average unskilled black laborer's family was typical of that for other working-class Americans at the time. And, as historian Kenneth Kusmer has written, ("On the whole, the black masses in the Northern ghettos in the 1920s could view their status as representing both an absolute and a relative advance over their former condition."

There was better education available for the children. You didn't have that fear they lived with in the South. You could vote. And things were slowly changing for the better. But then again, Philadelphia still wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

The best thing I could say about Philadelphia is that Philadelphia enabled me to do that for my family, and for that I am very proud. (William Brown)

The colored man didn't get much around here years ago. Didn't get much. There weren't any good jobs. You had to take what the other fellow didn't want. (Harvey Wilcox)
The Veterans

These are the men and women who participated in the Great Migration and shared their remembrances for this history. In a special way, the story we have told is theirs.

Hattie Alexander: Born 1900, outside Greenwood, S.C. Came with her family to Philadelphia in 1917. After her father died, returned home, but then came back to the city. Worked in the garment industry for many years and received her high school equivalency degree in 1977 at the age of 77.

Willie Allen: Born 1899 in Columbia, S.C. Came to Philadelphia in 1923 with her husband, whose uncle had a job for him. She did laundry and day work in the city from 1923 to 1950. Moved to North Philadelphia.

David Amey: Born 1893 outside of Durham, N.C. After making $42 for a whole year's work rearing tobacco, he came to Philadelphia in 1912, served in World War I, and upon his return to the city became a rector in South Philadelphia. During 1923 and 24, he worked in the real estate department of the Brown and Stevens Bank.

Dr. Marion Ballard: Born 1904 on Deal Island off the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Came to Philadelphia in 1923 to secure education enough to enter the ministry. Was minister of Tindley Temple in Philadelphia.

Crosby Brittenum: Born in rural Arkansas. Came to Philadelphia in early 1920s as escort for an elder cousin who couldn't read. Worked as a barber in the city for many years.

William Brown (pseudonym): Born 1896, Jacksonville, Fla. Filed Jacksonville in 1917 and started Philadelphia after a brief stay in New York. Worked in war industries and then established his own business as a carpentry contractor.

Edgar Campbell: Born 1902, Savannah, Ga. Family left Savannah in 1917 and arrived in Philadelphia a few years later. Mr. Campbell worked with his father's real estate business in West Philadelphia before going into politics. Helped organize the Democratic Party in West Philadelphia in the early 1930s.

Hughes Childe: Born 1880 on a farm outside Greenwood, S.C. While visiting a brother, he worked at the Midvale Steel plant in Nicetown in 1917. He returned to the city to stay in 1912. He spent his working days as a cook in Philadelphia and the suburbs.

Beaulah Collins: Born 1896, Eastern Shore of Maryland. After her husband died in the influenza epidemic of 1918, leaving her with child, Beaulah came to Philadelphia to work as a domestic and obtains a better education for her child.

William Fields: Born 1888 in Texas. Came to Philadelphia on the free transportation provided by the railroad and promptly got a job at Campbell Soup in Camden. He retired from laundry work in the city after 35 years.

Leon Grimes: Born 1899, Palatka, Fla. Came to Philadelphia in 1916 on the free transportation provided by the railroad and promptly got a job at Campbell Soup in Camden. He retired from laundry work in the city after 35 years.

Ernest Gray: Born circa 1897 on Cat Island, Ga. Came to Philadelphia in 1916 on the free transportation provided by the railroad and promptly got a job at Campbell Soup in Camden. He retired from laundry work in the city after 35 years.

Joseph Houchins: Born 1890, Washington, D.C. Came to Philadelphia in 1912 to work as a laborer in the Philadelphia suburbs; her first job at age 15. She lived at home if she could have had when she arrived. She still hasn't gotten completely over it.

George Madison: Born 1899, Miller's Tavern, Va. Came north to New Jersey with his family in 1922. Came to Philadelphia in 1926 and entered Temple University in 1927. Worked a number of jobs as servant and butler before joining post office, from which he retired.

Milo Manly: Born 1892 in Philadelphia, Pa. His father, A.D. Manly, Industrial secretary for the Armstrong Association, came to Philadelphia in 1891 after having been the editor of the only black daily newspaper in the country. He had served as secretary to one of the last Negro congressmen of the Reconstruction era. Milo left Cheltenham High School and worked around the city before landing a job with the Red Cross during the Depression. He was active with the NAACP, and worked for many years for the Federal Home Loan Bank and as a housing investigator during the transit strike of 1944.

Harold Martin: Born 1911 in Enfield, N.C. Father moved the family north to Philadelphia in 1913. Started in father's real estate business as an office boy in 1917. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Martin has been active in the NAACP, serving as secretary during the 1930s. Father was president of the NAACP, Philadelphia branch, during the 1920s.

Marie Mathis: Born 1910 outside Greenwood, S.C. Father brought family north about 1922. Marie didn't like housework and took jobs in the city's tobacco factories during the 1920s.

Lilly McKnight: Born 1894 in Columbia, S.C. "Took a notion" and came to Philadelphia along with two friends in 1926. Did domestic work in the city for over 50 years.

James Plunkett: Born 1896 outside Danville, Va. Son of a sharecropper, started work on the farm at age 11. Having heard glowing reports about the North, he went to work in a brickyard outside New York in the spring of 1917 before making his way to relatives in Philadelphia, where he worked for the railroad. Over the years worked as a barber, in construction and in factories.

William Robinson: Born 1889 in rural Georgia. "Took a notion" to come to Philadelphia in 1928 along with some friends, basically to see what things were like. First job was as a stevedore on the waterfront, but that being too heavy, took up bookkeeping, had his own shop in North Philadelphia for many years.

John Summers: Born 1888 in Columbus, Ohio. Came to Philadelphia in 1918 to serve as one of three colored inspectors at Hog Island shipyard. Was a reporter for black newspapers during the 1920s and politicall very active, serving as state secretary for Al Smith's presidential campaign in 1928 and running for the state legislature in 1938. Beginning in the 1930s, became a union organizer for the CIO. Helped organize the Coatesville Steel Works in 1937.

Charles Vance: Born 1902 outside Mobile, Ala. Left home at age 15 and worked throughout the South in coal mines, labor gangs and on the railroads, before he came to Philadelphia in 1927 in search of better work. Worked in construction as a labor foreman for many years.

Arrow Vaughan: Born Northampton County, N.C. Came to Philadelphia in 1931. Worked as a nurse, married.

Minnie Whitney: Born 1902 in Accomack County, Va. Ran away from home and came to Philadelphia at the age of 16, where she did domestic work. Subsequently went to New York, where she heard there were better opportunities and returned to Philadelphia after she retired from the laundry business.

Annabelle White: Born in rural South Carolina. Came to Philadelphia in 1923 with her father after he had ventured there, having asked for his wages in cash at the sawmill, was told he would never live to spend them.

Harvey Wilson: Born 1880 in Mayville, S.C. Died 1912. Came to Philadelphia from Jacksonville in 1917. He was terribly disappointed at the lack of opportunities for black men in Philadelphia and would have returned home but for the embarrassment of not having done better. Later became a wholesale grocer in the city and church historian at Mother Bethel.

Boyd Vance: Born 1898 in Beaufort, Va. Came to Philadelphia in 1919 to serve as a black nurse to support her family back home. Worked as a nurse, and a nanny in private service. Her first job in Philadelphia paid $10 a week.

Mrs. E.: Born 1892 in Philadelphia. Father was one of the city's first Black police officers. She worked with the Armstrong Association from 1927 into the 1940s as an industrial secretary, helping to find work for black women in the city's industries and businesses.
This special Daily News school supplement is a project of the Newspaper in Education Program and was prepared under the auspices of the Atwater Kent Museum — The History Museum of Philadelphia.

The material is based on a yearlong oral history project, conducted by Charles Hardy and written and produced by him as a five-part radio documentary for WHYY 91-FM. Assisting with the interviews were Donna Devore, Diane Turner, Harriet Garrett and Jacquie Carlisle. Assisting with locating and documenting historical photographs were George Dutton and Fredric Miller. Project photographer: Donnie Roberts. Musical consultants: David Goldenberg, Dennis Mercler, Doug Seroff and Russ Shor.

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For further information on special Daily News school supplements, call the Newspaper in Education Program at 854-5537.

The Voice of 'Goin' North'
The Rev. Marshall Lorenzo Shephard Jr., pastor of the Mount Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia, will narrate the series "Goin' North: Tales of the Great Migration" on WHYY 91-FM.

‘Goin’ North’: On the Air

"Life in the South"
Monday, Feb. 11, 4:25 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 17, 6 p.m.

"Goin’ North"
Monday, Feb. 18, 4:25 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 24, 6 p.m.

"The Newcomers"
Monday, Feb. 25, 4:25 p.m.; Sunday, March 3, 6 p.m.

"Domestic Work"
Monday, March 4, 4:25 p.m.; Sunday, March 10, 6 p.m.

"Men’s Work"
Monday, March 11, 4:25 p.m.; Sunday, March 17, 6 p.m.

Narrated by Rev. Marshall Lorenzo Shephard Jr., Pastor, Mount Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church