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Writing African American Migrations[1]

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Efforts to write the history of the African American migrations of the Civil War era, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive Era began soon after the start of these historically significant movements. Early scholarship labored to surmount the same methodological obstacles faced by modern scholars, notably scarce documentation, but still produced pathbreaking studies such as W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro*, Carter Woodson's *A Century of Negro Migration*, and Clyde Kiser's *Sea Island to City*. Modern scholarship since the 1950s falls into eight distinct genres. An assessment of representative works in each genre reveals a variety of configurations of strengths and weaknesses, while offering guidelines for future research.

Time is the historian's friend, but space is often our enemy. For few of our subjects does this generalization carry more force than African American workers and their families. Many of those who undertook white Americans' Great Migration—the westward movement—were emboldened by their sense of undertaking an heroic national mission to record their observations, thereby assisting historians to circumvent the limitations imposed by official record makers' cursory treatment of geographic mobility.[2] But African American migrants neither possessed the confidence of sharing a national purpose nor controlled the resources necessary to document as fully their own, equally significant migration. Despite enormous documentary lacunae, investigators since the 1870s have managed to describe some of the choices that drew African Americans across the landscape between the Civil War and the Great Depression and to trace some of the historic consequences of those choices. By weighing the strengths of those investigations against their shortcomings we will, I hope, equip ourselves

[1]The author thanks Stewart Tolnay for a critique and many helpful suggestions and Nina Reid-Maroney for her insightful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

[2]Among studies of the westward movement based on migrant memoirs, see John D. Unruh Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1860* (Urbana, 1979); John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, 1979); and Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: "Civilizing" the West? 1840–1880* (1979; New York, 1998).

to understand more fully ordinary acts that produced extraordinary consequences.

African American mobility furnished a durable theme in the debates over slavery during the antebellum period. The arrival of fugitive slaves and, more important, the prospect of further movement from the South to the North account for passage during the 1850s of black exclusion laws in Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois; Michigan had excluded African Americans since the 1820s.[3] The outbreak of the Civil War, by fueling the fears of European Americans over an imminent influx of black neighbors, raised the pitch and turned up the volume of debate.[4] Even residents of faraway Minnesota and Wisconsin petitioned their state legislatures for protection from feared incursions of black southerners.[5] African Americans did move north in large numbers during the turbulence of the war, but the flow ebbed in the quarter-century that followed its end, until a new and more sustained rise began in the 1890s. That movement culminated in the First Great Migration, which slackened after 1929.[6] Efforts to document the scale and explain the dynamics of African American migrations during the Civil War, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive Era have continued from the onset of the migrations to the present, and, although much has been learned, large questions remain unanswered. In this essay I will trace the principal contours of migration historiography, identify the major methodological problems that beset our efforts at understanding, and suggest what needs to be done in the future.

But first, a word about the significance of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era black migrations. The number of roughly two million who migrated from South to North between 1860 and 1930 was of course dwarfed by the more than four million whose choices produced the Second Great Migration of 1940–1970.[7] Yet the Civil War, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era migrants not only created the channels through which the later migration would move, but they also

[3]James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988), 88; David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, 1973), 6–7.

[4]McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 506–10.

[5]Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill, 2009), 31.

[6]For an overview of African American migrations, see Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, *Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History* (Durham, NC, 1981).

[7]Michael P. Johnson, "Out of Egypt: The Migration of Former Slaves to the Midwest during the 1860s in Comparative Perspective" in *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*, eds. Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod, (Bloomington, IN, 1999), 223–45; Johnson and Campbell, *Black Migration in America*, 57–89; Craig W. Heinecke, "Demographic Patterns of the Great Black Migration (1940–1970)" in *Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration*, ed. Steven A. Reich (Westport, CT, 2006), 1:239–43.

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influenced the history of their own times.[8] Which of those effects one chooses to emphasize depends, as usual, on one's perspective. Cultural historians highlight the arrival of southern black culture, such as new genres of music and dance, in northern urban centers, as well as black struggles to shape the national memory of slavery, the Civil War, and Emancipation.[9] Urban historians underscore the creation of new kinds of African American communities, wealthier and more diverse in background, in Harlem, Chicago's South Side and later its West Side, and other large cities.[10] Social historians emphasize, among other phenomena, construction of a dense institutional network, especially by women, which supported political as well as benevolent activism.[11] From the perspective of political history, these migrations gave African Americans a voice and a vote that were being suppressed and robbed from those who remained in the South. As early as the 1880s, African American activists won significant statutory changes in Ohio and Illinois.[12] By 1910, the African American press was largely based outside the South, yet its newspapers circulated among the vast majority of their people who remained in the former slave states.[13] By 1936, when African Americans voted overwhelmingly Democratic for the first time, the pre-1930 migrants became a critical part of the New Deal coalition, and their concentration in key cities in swing states provided the political muscle behind African Americans' first success in national power politics, the March

[8]Richard Raymond, "Determinants of Non-White Migration during the 1950s: Their Regional Significance and Long-Run Implications," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 31 (Jan. 1972): 9–20, shows that the size of cities' non-white population was the "dominant determinant" of the size of their in-migration flow.

[9]Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York, 1995); Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia, 1990), chs. 1–2; Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, ch. 7; Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808–1915* (Amherst, MA, 2003).

[10]See, for example, Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890–1930* (New York, 1966); Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890–1920* (Chicago, 1967); Kenneth L. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870–1930* (Urbana, IL, 1976); James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989); Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington, KY, 1998).

[11]Darlene Clark Hine, *When the Truth is Told: A History of Black Women's Culture and Community in Indiana, 1875–1950* (Indianapolis, 1981), chs. 2–3; Darlene Clark Hine, "'We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible': The Philanthropic Work of Black Women" in *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), 109–28; Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson, *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America* (New York, 1998), chs. 7–9; Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York, 1996); Wanda A. Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington, IN, 1998); Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham, NC, 1997).

[12]Jack S. Blocker, *A Little More Freedom: African Americans Enter the Urban Midwest, 1860–1930* (Columbus, 2008), 86–88.

[13]Emma Lou Thornbrough, "American Negro Newspapers, 1880–1914," *Business History Review* 40 (Winter 1966): 467–90; Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Building Networks: Cooperation and Communication Among African Americans in the Urban Midwest, 1860–1910," *Indiana Magazine of History* 94 (Dec. 2003); 381–86.

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on Washington Movement in 1941.[14] It is neither bold nor daring to conclude that, insofar as the public debate over African American mobility stemmed from fear of change in American society, that apprehension was eminently well justified. History did turn into new paths as a result of the decisions of ordinary people, people who generally acted contrary to the admonitions of their leaders.

Methodological Issues

Just as it is difficult to overstate the significance of African Americans' mobility, so it is hard to overestimate the obstacles we face in understanding their behavior. We historians are not good at describing people in motion.[15] We prefer topics that allow us to focus on people in places, where the effects of time can be traced while the meaning of place is held constant. Alternatively, we compare the behavior of people in different places, which incorporates an assumption that our subjects have been influenced only by the place in which they were located during the study period. In this, as in so many other ways, we are the creatures of our sources. Most of our sources—and this is pre-eminently true of our first and best source for social history, the census—were either produced in and about a particular place or are organized by place. What happens when people move between places is recorded by few sources but oral history, and frequently not even in oral histories.[16] As a result, answers to the interrelated questions of who, what, when, where, how, and why of migrations elude us.

Distinguishing who migrated from who did not is basic to understanding motivation. So is identifying migrants who chose different destinations. (In fact, because of undercounting of African Americans by the census and "the absorption of mulattoes by the white population," we may not even have an accurate count of African American migrants from South to North.[17]) Still, no one has conducted for African Americans in any southern community before 1930 the sort of comparative analysis of leavers and stayers that Stephan Thernstrom and Peter Knights famously carried out for Boston.[18] A new

[14]Nancy J. Weiss, "Political Realignment," in *Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration*, 2:686–89.

[15]In this historians are not alone. Stewart Tolnay points out that "of the traditional trinity of demographic processes (fertility, mortality, and migration), migration is probably the least studied by sociologists." "The African American 'Great Migration' and Beyond," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003): 209.

[16]Sociologist Charles Tilly has noted that "for a country that has done so famously in the collection and storage of other kinds of data, the United States has pitifully little reliable information on migration." Tilly, "Race and Migration to the American City" in *The Metropolitan Enigma*, ed. James Q. Wilson (New York, 1970), 156.

[17]Florette Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900–1920* (Garden City, NJ, 1975), 183.

[18]Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1(Autumn 1970): 7–35. One sociological study of African American migration does provide interview-based data on the backgrounds and motivations of migrants to Chicago from various southern states, as well as information on non-migrants living in Mississippi: E. Marvin Goodwin, *Black Migration in America from 1915 to 1960: An Uneasy Exodus* (Lewiston, NY, 1990). However,

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tool, the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), offers great potential for comparing migrants with non-migrants along the usual dimensions afforded by the federal census, but so far few historians have exploited this opportunity.[19]

When I first began reading oral-history interviews with migrants who ended up in northern cities, my mental picture of migration received a nasty shock. Census records and the studies based on them had painted a tidy portrait of people who were born in the South moving in straight lines to the North. The migrants themselves told a quite different story. Two examples will convey what I mean. Versia Ashley left rural Kentucky at the age of 16 for Bowling Green in the same state. After four years, she moved to Indianapolis, where she lived for eight years, during which she married. Her husband died soon afterward, and she moved to Pontiac, Michigan, to live with her step-sister. After a year, she left Pontiac for Flint, Michigan, where she lived for "a year or a little better." She then returned to Pontiac before moving to her final destination, Muncie, Indiana, in 1934.[20] Daniel Bonds, born in 1870, by the age of 13 years was working in a brickyard in Mineral City, Ohio. He moved to Wheeling, West Virginia, before migrating to Canton, Ohio, in 1892. After 18 years in Canton, Bonds put on his traveling shoes, moving to Michigan, Montana, and Washington State, then returning to Canton, where he was interviewed in the 1970s.[21] For Ashley and Bonds, the decisions that brought them from their origin to their destination were not singular but multiple, did not move them smoothly upward through the urban hierarchy, and were separated by years. Possibly their multiple decisions were driven by the same set of goals and aspirations and conditioned by the same general context, but, as we all know, as we age

Goodwin lumps together migrants from the First and Second Great Migrations and provides no comparative analysis of his migrant/non-migrant data.

[19]Thomas N. Maloney, "African American Migration to the North: New Evidence for the 1910s," *Economic Inquiry* 40 (Jan. 2002): 1–11, compares migrants and non-migrants in 1910 and 1920 according to sex, age, literacy, and marital status; Maloney, "Migration and Economic Opportunity in the 1910s: New Evidence on African-American Occupational Mobility in the North," *Explorations in Economic History* 38 (Jan. 2001): 147–65, compares the status of southern- and northern-born in the North, as does Stewart E. Tolnay, "The Great Migration Gets Underway: A Comparison of Black Southern Migrants and Nonmigrants in the North, 1920," *Social Science Quarterly* 82 (June 2001): 235–52. This approach provides more information about conditions in places than about motivation. See also James N. Gregory, "The Southern Diaspora and the Urban Dispossessed: Demonstrating the Census Public Use Microdata Samples," *Journal of American History* 82 (June 1995): 111–34; Jason C. Digman, "Which Way to the Promised Land? Changing Patterns in Southern Migration, 1865–1920" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2001); Patricia Kelly Hall and Steven Ruggles, "'Restless in the Midst of Their Prosperity': New Evidence on the Internal Migration of Americans, 1850–2000," *Journal of American History* 91 (Dec. 2004): 829–46.

[20]Interview, Versia Ashley, no date, Black Middletown Project, Special Collections, Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

[21]Interview, Daniel Bonds, no date, Black Oral History of Canton, Ohio, Stark County District Library, Canton. For further examples of multiple, zigzag moves, see Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Black Migration to Muncie, 1860–1930," *Indiana Magazine of History* 92 (Dec. 1996): 312.

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we change, and the world changes around us. (If both kinds of change did not occur, we would all be out of a job.) As historical sociologist William Sewell Jr. has pointed out, historians are especially sensitive to the sequence in which events occur: "Every act," we are keenly aware, "is part of a *sequence* of actions and . . . its effects are profoundly dependent upon its place in the sequence."[22] When migration occurs through multiple moves, it makes explaining migrants' motivation extremely complex, as it raises serious questions about the what, the where, and the when.

Answering the questions of how migrants planned and traveled is beset by similar complexity. What forms of communication were available to learn about potential destinations? What means of transportation could be utilized and at what cost? Did migrants travel from origin to destination in a single jump or by a series of steps? Such questions resonate strongly when considering the fundamental issue of agency. For example, when a period of high mobility, such as the Civil War, is followed by a span of years during which the migration stream shrinks, such as the Gilded Age, the likelihood that communication and transportation in the latter period were equal or better than in the former strongly suggests deliberate decision making to stay rather than leave. However, to establish how much potential migrants knew and which transport options were available to them is extremely difficult.[23] In the absence of good oral history, establishing migration sequences is also problematic, as the manuscript census supports only very crude inferential information through the birthplace records of a family's children. Nevertheless, as I have already noted, tracing migration sequences is critical to analyzing motivation.

Perhaps the fundamental problem in specifying the motivations of migrants, as for other historical actors, lies in reconciling the perceptions of participant and observer. Historians of migration cite major forces such as the experience of slavery, the turbulence of the Civil War, anti-black violence, the advance of disfranchisement and segregation in southern states, flooding, the ravages of the boll weevil, and the interruption of European immigration by the World War, plus the restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s and the concomitant opening of industrial jobs to African Americans. Migrants, however, seldom

[22]William H. Sewell Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago, 2005), 7. Emphasis was in original.

[23]A pioneering effort to trace the sequence of railway construction and relate it to migration is found in Donna R. Gabaccia, "Constructing North America: Railroad Building and the Rise of Continental Migrations, 1850–1914" in *Repositioning North American Migration History: New Directions in Modern Continental Migration, Citizenship, and Community*, ed. Marc S. Rodriguez (Rochester, NY, 2004), 27–53.

cite such factors in their explanations of their decisions to migrate. Indeed, they rarely provide any explanations, even in the best oral histories.[24]

When migrants do describe their mobility, the meaning they ascribe to it sometimes fails to match the meaning an historian perceives. I have long been fascinated by the stories of Alexander and Belle Kelley, a couple who met and married in Indianapolis and moved to Muncie in 1886. (I met their granddaughters in Muncie in 2001.) Both were former slaves, Alexander in North Carolina and Belle in Kentucky. Historians would portray their respective migrations to Indiana as a movement from South to North. Not Alexander and Belle, however. Even though in fact both traveled farther north than west to reach Indianapolis, both described their mobility as movement "west." To my eyes, a migration of former slaves from the places where they had been enslaved to a free state is a racially motivated action. In Alexander and Belle's eyes, however, they simply acted as did many other Americans, black and white, when they moved, as Alexander put it, to "where I would have better advantages."[25] The Kelleys could not have known that their migration north would be followed by hundreds of thousands by 1930 and by millions more after 1940. They did not have a Chicago *Defender* to tell them that the North represented a promised land. Were "South" and "North" meaningful concepts to them or to other migrants? Were migrants fleeing segregation when they moved from segregated Alabama to segregated Chicago? Did the distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation hold any meaning for those who were segregated? Male migrants, who gained the vote by their mobility, may have seen a difference between South and North. How did black women view the political dimensions of migration before the advent of women's suffrage in 1920 or even after? In short, did southern migrants to the North think of the meaning of their moves as historians do? Until we can know whether or not they did, our conclusions about motivation will remain speculative.

Early Scholarship

"Will free African Americans move north?" had been a pervasive theme of American public discourse since at least the beginnings of the antislavery movement, but the opening of scholarly debate on the subject owes its origin to an

[24]A notable exception is the remarkable set of letters from would-be migrants to Chicago published in Emmett J. Scott, comp., "Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–18," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (July 1919): 290–340, and "Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–18," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (Oct. 1919): 412–65.

[25]Interview, Alexander Kelley, no date, in *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement, Series 1*, ed. George P. Rawick (Westport, CT, 1972–79); Ibid., Vol. V, 106.

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actual migration, the so-called Kansas Exodus of 1879.[26] At the annual meeting of the American Social Science Association, held at Saratoga Springs, New York, in September 1879, Frederick Douglass and Richard Greener, dean of the Howard University law school, gave their views on the migration from the Deep South to Kansas, which had taken place a few months before. Douglass's paper began by attempting to refute explanations that assumed the migrants to be dupes of those having their own political or economic ends in view. He portrayed the Kansas migrants as responding to racial oppression in the South. With one rhetorical hand, Douglass held out the right to emigrate; with the other, he brandished a stop sign, affirming that "the habit of roaming from place to place in pursuit of better conditions of existence is by no means a good one. A man should never leave his home for a new one till he has earnestly endeavored to make his immediate surroundings accord with his wishes."[27] In words that his biographer William McFeely describes as "appalling," Frederick Douglass became the first in what was to become a long line of African American leaders to advise their people in the South to cast down their bucket where they were.[28]

In his response to Douglass, Greener agreed that the migrants were impelled by southern oppression, but he parted company with Douglass by pointing to the North's complicity in that oppression through its decision to abandon black southerners with the end of Reconstruction. Unlike Douglass, Greener quoted the words of an Exoduster on conditions in the South, and he also sought empirical evidence on the quality of life in black communities in Kansas and Indian territory. With a confidence no doubt buoyed by the racial changes he had witnessed during the Civil War decade, Greener pictured the North as a more welcoming environment for African Americans: "The average negro can earn higher wages and live more comfortably at the North, even if confined to humble employments, than he can at the South. When we add such trifles as protection, school privileges, free suffrage and Christian influences, we transcend the limits of legitimate comparison." In an insightful peroration, he greeted the exodus as a forerunner of even greater migrations.[29]

As African American migrations dwindled to a trickle during the decade following the Kansas Exodus, so too did scholarly debate over the topic

[26]For the public debate over the Exodus, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (1977; Lawrence, KS, 1986), chs. 16, 17, 19; Robert G. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas, 1879–80* (Lawrence, KS, 1978).

[27]Frederick Douglass, "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States," *Journal of Social Science* 11 (May 1880): 1–21 (quotation 15). Douglass did not attend the conference but sent his paper to be read by another.

[28]William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York, 1991), 301–04.

[29]Richard T. Greener, "The Emigration of Colored Citizens from the Southern States," *Journal of Social Science* 11 (May 1880): 22–35 (quotation 26).

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diminish.[30] The migrations of the Gilded Age, however, gradually accumulated larger and larger black populations in northern cities, to the point at which white philanthropists in Philadelphia in 1896 commissioned a pioneering sociological study of what they deemed to be a social problem: the condition of the largest African American community in the North. From the perspective of migration historiography, W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) is notable for three reasons. First, it constructed the template for what was to become the most common form of scholarly investigation of African American migrations, the single-community study. Second, it rested on a more solid empirical foundation than any of the single-community studies that were to follow in its train, with detailed questionnaires administered—personally by Du Bois—to the residents of 2,500 households in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward. What makes *The Philadelphia Negro* most significant, however, is that its author paid attention to migration. Du Bois included in his questionnaires, not only a question on place of birth, but also a query about length of residence in Philadelphia. He was able to show that more than two-thirds of both males and females were migrants. He correlated place of birth and time of arrival with age. Drawing on a prior study of Farmville, a rural Virginia community, he argued that, although most Philadelphia migrants came from nearby states, step migration was common. Tabulating all his correlations by hand, Du Bois could not afford the time he needed to incorporate the migration variables into his analyses of occupations, health and mortality, family structure, or education and illiteracy, although he did employ length of residence in his examination of property holding. Nor did he ask his respondents about their mode of travel or their reasons for leaving home, making their stops along the way, or choosing Philadelphia. Although he neglected the how and the why of migration, Du Bois made issues of the where and the when. By coupling his Farmville and Philadelphia studies, he connected an origin with a destination. Most important, he demonstrated the importance of interrogating the best source there is for understanding migration: the migrants themselves.[31]

Du Bois's example was not followed, however, by the next authoritative voice to speak on the topic, the father of African American history, Carter G. Woodson—possibly

[30]The principal exception was a symposium in the *North American Review* in 1884 on "The Future of the Negro," in which Douglass and Greener participated. Most of the ten contributors agreed that most African Americans would not emigrate from the South.

[31]W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899; Philadelphia, 1996). The discussion of migration is on pages 73–82. The making of *The Philadelphia Negro* is discussed in David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1010* (New York, 1993), ch. 8. See also Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: The Philadelphia Negro and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia, 1998).

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because of the rivalry between the two Harvard PhDs.[32] In 1918, as the tide of the First Great Migration swelled, Woodson published *A Century of Negro Migration* to trace for the first time the contours of African American mobility across the full sweep of American history.[33] In compiling his synthesis, Woodson drew on the best available scholarship, notably including Abraham Epstein's newly published study of recent migrants to Pittsburgh.[34] When the best available scholarship was infected by anti-black prejudice, as in the studies of Reconstruction by historians of the Dunning School, Woodson pointed out its deficiencies.[35] He devoted ample space to examination of the causes of the Kansas Exodus and the World War I migrations.[36] He recognized the interrelationship between segregation, disfranchisement, sharecropping, and the crop-lien system in the South on one hand and the appeal of economic opportunity in the North created by the cessation of European immigration on the other.[37] Although he rarely referred to migrant views of migration, for its time *A Century of Negro Migration* is a remarkable achievement.

Because of its scope and the imprimatur of Woodson's authority, *A Century of Negro Migration* may have crowded out other historical investigations of African American migration for years following its publication. It is striking that none of the group of talented African American historians nurtured by Woodson—scholars such as Alrutheus Taylor, Charles Wesley, Lorenzo Greene, Sherman Savage, James Hugo Johnston, Luther Jackson, and Rayford Logan—devoted a monographic study to migration. During the 1920s and 1930s few white historians devoted themselves to black history, and none to black migration.[38] What detailed study of migration took place was carried out by pioneering African American sociologists such as Richard R. Wright Jr. and Charles S. Johnson, economist George Edmund Haynes, and journalist and college administrator Emmett J. Scott. These writers deployed statistical analysis, often in an effort to demonstrate parallelism between black and non-black migrations, and some also placed at center stage the voices of the migrants themselves.[39]

[32]The rivalry between Woodson and Du Bois is described in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana, 1986), 10–15.

[33]Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington, 1918).

[34]Abraham Epstein, *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1917).

[35]Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration*, 119–20. C. Vann Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (Baton Rouge, 1986), 24, points out that this interpretation "preceded Dunning and was more the product of a regional white consensus than of a school or a scholar."

[36]Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration*, 126–34, 167–92.

[37]Ibid., 169–73.

[38]Meier and Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession*, 73–97.

[39]R. R. Wright Jr., "Migration of Negroes to the North," *Annals of the American Academy* 27 (May 1906): 559–78; Charles S. Johnson, "How Much Is the Migration a Flight from Persecution?" *Opportunity* 1 (Sept. 1923): 272–74, and Johnson "The Negro Migration: An Economic Interpretation," *The Modern Quarterly* 2 (July 1925): 314–26;

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A notable exception to the neglect of African American migration by white scholars of the twenties and thirties was a sparkling monograph by a twenty-four-year-old sociologist, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina. Traveling back and forth between St. Helena Island, South Carolina, on one hand and Harlem, Savannah, and Boston on the other, Clyde Vernon Kiser in 1928 and 1929 carried out the first detailed study focused squarely on African American migration.[40] A capable historian, Kiser began his story with the Spanish claim to the Sea Islands before tracing the impact of the Civil War and the conditions in the early twentieth century that made emigration a rational choice. In addition to detailing conditions in both the migrants' origin and three destinations, Kiser paid close attention to what transpired between origin and destinations. He found that the migration stream consisted largely of young adults of both sexes; that Savannah acted as both a final destination and a stepping-stone to the northern cities; that step migration was more common in the early phase of St. Helenians' mobility than during the twenties; that the Gilded Age migrants, though relatively few in number, "were pioneers who blazed the routes of travel and greatly influenced the selection of destinations of the larger numbers in later periods"[41]; that earlier migrants to Harlem furnished valuable aid and assistance to those who followed; and that decisions were influenced both by causes that operated elsewhere, such as the impact of the boll weevil, and those specific to St. Helena, such as the decline of phosphate mining. He squarely addressed all of the questions: who, what, when, where, how, and why.

Most impressively, Kiser gave full weight to the voices of both migrants and non-migrants, even including three long reminiscences in an appendix. *Sea Island to City* was a model study of migration, testing the best theory of its time against a solid empirical base. In its tight linkage between a migration's origins and its

George Edmund Haynes, "The Migration of Negroes from Country to City," *Southern Workman* 47 (Apr. 1913): 230–36; Haynes, "Conditions among Negroes in the Cities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 49 (Sept. 1913): 105–19; Haynes, "Migration of Negroes into Northern Cities," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* 49 (1917): 494–96; Haynes, "Negroes Move North: I. Their Departure from the South," *Survey* 40 (May 4, 1918): 115–22; Haynes, "Negroes Move North: II," *Survey* 41 (Jan. 4, 1919): 455–61; U. S. Department of Labor, Division of Negro Economics, *Negro Migration in 1910–17*, ed. George Edmunds Haynes (Washington, 1919); Scott, comp., "Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–18," and Scott, "Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–18"; Scott, *Negro Migration during the War* (New York, 1920). Johnson also played a major role in researching and writing the report of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago* (Chicago, 1922), which includes an examination of migration. See also Richard Robbins, *Sidelines Activist: Charles S. Johnson and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Jackson, MS, 1996). An important article by a later sociologist is Lyonel C. Florant, "Negro Internal Migration," *American Sociological Review* 7 (Dec. 1942): 782–91.

[40]Clyde Vernon Kiser, *Sea Island to City: A Study of St. Helena Islanders in Harlem and Other Urban Centers* (1932; New York, 1967).

[41]Ibid., 93.

destinations, it has had no successors. Its singularity stems, I think, from St. Helena's peculiarities, in both practical and methodological terms. The cohesiveness of this rural community gave Kiser the crucial information he needed to follow St. Helenians to Savannah, Harlem, and Boston. However, St. Helena was unrepresentative of black southerners in two other key respects: it was a society of landowners and a nearly all-black community. Sharecropping and segregation, factors that commentators from Frederick Douglass and Richard Greener to Carter Woodson had fingered as central to migration, did not figure large on St. Helena Island.

Modern Scholarship

Following a lull in the 1940s and 1950s, historical studies of African American migration proliferated beginning in the 1960s. The Second Great Migration, the civil rights movement, and the Second Reconstruction opened our eyes to the importance of the black mobility of the Civil War, the Gilded Age, and the First Great Migration. Also contributing was a larger turn to African American history by European American historians and the emergence of a new generation of African American history PhDs.[42] Migration studies since the late 1950s can be divided into eight genres: overviews, general studies, examinations of specific migrations, community studies, histories of African Americans in single states, analyses of racial violence, individual-level comparisons, and regional studies. I will briefly discuss in turn the advantages and disadvantages of each genre or its representative works.

Although they rarely provide new information, overviews can perform the useful function of summarizing scholarship on a topic and thereby building a platform for further research by identifying murky areas or unresolved issues. By this standard, the African American migrations of the Civil War, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era are poorly served. Not only is there no overview of these migrations specifically, there is also no useful overview of migrations that includes them. The closest simulacrum is a book by sociologists Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, now nearly thirty years old, *Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History*. This work, however, represents a synthesis only in the weak sense that it covers a long period; by the more significant criterion of synthesizing existing research into a new formulation, it fails utterly.[43]

[42]Meier and Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession*, chs. 2–3.

[43]See the review of Johnson and Campbell, *Black Migration in America*, by economic historian Gavin Wright, *Journal of Economic History* 41 (Dec. 1981): 927–28. Also, *Black Migration in America* does not compare black and white migrations.

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Two general studies of migration, one by an economic historian, William Vickery, and the other by a sociologist, Neil Fligstein, only pick up the story in 1900, a periodization that has no justification whatsoever in the behavior under examination because the critical surges in the northward migration stream began in the 1890s and 1910s.[44] Nevertheless, both take on the central task of explaining migratory decisions, and one proceeds by comparing the actions of African Americans and European Americans. Vickery covers the entire United States to 1960, using states as the unit of analysis, whereas Fligstein focuses on counties in nine southern states to 1950. Although their studies are heavily quantitative, their findings cannot be usefully compared because one measures gross migration whereas the other employs net. Although their data and some of their specific conclusions are informative, their conclusions can only be suggestive because of the level of aggregation required for studies of such broad scope.

Several studies focus on specific, time-limited migrations. Two books have been written on the Kansas Exodus of 1879 and one on the mobility of black southerners between the Civil War and the First Great Migration. Two others have dealt with the First Great Migration in general, not the movement to specific places. Focusing on a specific movement limited in time and space can be a fruitful strategy when origins and destinations can be linked and local case studies can both distinguish migrants from non-migrants and measure the wages of migration. Unfortunately, the Kansas Exodus has been defined as much by the political uproar over the movement from the Deep South states of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas as by the actions of the migrants themselves. As Nell Painter pointed out in *Exodusters*, Kansas received many more African American migrants during the 1870s from the Upper South states of Kentucky and Tennessee than from the Deep South.[45] Her stimulating book, nevertheless, focuses on post-Reconstruction national politics rather than the migration to Kansas itself. When she does turn to the migrants, her intriguing characterization of them as millenarians is unsupported by comparison with non-migrants. Robert Athearn, in his attention to the Exodusters' reception in Kansas, implicitly defines the movement by various white American reactions to it. Examining the pre-Great Migration mobility of black southerners, William

[44]William Edward Vickery, *Economics of the Negro Migration, 1900–1960* (New York, 1977); Neil Fligstein, *Going North: Migration of Blacks and Whites from the South, 1900–1950* (New York, 1981). The year 1900 also serves as a starting point for an otherwise fine comparative synthesis on the effects of twentieth-century black and white migrations from the South: James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill, 2005).

[45]Painter, *Exodusters*, 146–47. The point is further supported in William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861–1915* (Baton Rouge, 1991), app. B.

Cohen makes a useful contribution by showing how hard southern planters and state governments tried to contain black mobility, but, again, the focus is on actions of European Americans. We may never know how many African Americans wanted to leave, but until we do, we cannot say how effective were the containment measures Cohen has elucidated.

Two books focus specifically on the First Great Migration of 1916–1930, *Black Migration* by freelance writer Florette Henri in 1975 and *Farewell—We're Good and Gone* by sociologist Carole Marks fourteen years later. Their interpretations are totally at odds. Henri stressed migrant agency: "They were choosers, makers, and doers," she wrote.[46] This was a remarkable stance at a time when the first historical studies on African American communities in northern cities were being written firmly within the framework of what Joe Trotter calls "the ghetto synthesis," through which their subjects appeared largely as victims.[47] In a book whose coverage was much broader than its title suggests, Henri argued that the migration succeeded in bringing migrants into settings that, although hostile, carried improvement to their lives in manifold ways. For Marks, in contrast, "migrants, as a collective, do not choose among their fates."[48] Migrants to the North came disproportionately from the ranks of urban workers, displaced as a result of southern underdevelopment, propelled north by the demands of labor-starved industry during the war, but relegated to the dregs of the industrial economy once the crisis passed. "Their reward was poverty in the North."[49] Neither, however, could prove her case, because both were based on highly aggregated statistics, and both were written in the absence of an adequate monographic foundation for the top-heavy interpretive structures they constructed. To their credit, however, both authors did address the question of how black southerners learned about conditions in the North, and Marks's claim about the migrants' urban-industrial experience was provocative, if unpersuasive.[50]

[46]Henri, *Black Migration*, x. Robert Margo, *Race and Schooling in the South, 1880–1950: An Economic History* (Chicago, 1990), ch. 7, deals with education's role in the First Great Migration.

[47]Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana, 1985), app.7, 264–82.

[48]Carole Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington, IN, 1989), 13.

[49]Ibid., 176. A study that tries to identify the urban origins of Great Migration migrants to Pittsburgh, using marriage-license applications, is J. Trent Alexander, "The Great Migration in Comparative Perspective: Interpreting the Urban Origins of Southern Black Migrants to Depression-Era Pittsburgh," *Social Science History* 22 (Fall 1998): 349–76.

[50]Grossman, *Land of Hope*, probably the most useful study of the First Great Migration, is nonetheless limited both spatially and temporally by its focus on the migration of 1916–19 to Chicago. Another major monograph, Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land*, addresses a different set of issues, the meaning of the First Great Migration for African American religion, rather than the who, what, when, where, how, and why of migration.

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The single-community study, first designed by Du Bois as a vehicle for understanding African American life, stalled during the 1940s and 1950s then picked up speed in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and continues on its way with unabated momentum today. It has become by far the most-utilized mode of transport for those who would advance knowledge of African American migration. Through a community study one can explore a wide range of questions about phenomena as diverse as social structure, work and occupations, property holding, family life, cultural expression, organizational activity, benevolence, race relations, and political activism—among many others.[51] However, as a vehicle for understanding migration, the community study is about as useful as a skateboard on a gravel road: it won't get you very far. It can only tell us about a place or about people within a place. Even if a community study tries to tell us about how the people who ended up in that place got there, it cannot tell us why they—but not others from their origin—traveled to that destination. It can describe the qualities of its place, but it cannot tell us which of those qualities migrants found sufficiently attractive to move there. It cannot tell us whether

[51]Epstein, *Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh*; Seth Scheiner, *Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865–1920* (New York, 1965); Osofsky, *Harlem*; Spear, *Black Chicago*; Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, 1967); David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, 1973); Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*; Elizabeth Pleck, *Black Migration and Poverty: Boston, 1865–1900* (New York, 1979); Theodore Hershberg, ed., *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981); John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Urbana, 1982); James E. DeVries, *Race and Kinship in a Midwestern Town: The Black Experience in Monroe, Michigan, 1900–1915* (Urbana, 1984); Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*; Darrel E. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana* (Bloomington, IN, 1987); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–30* (Urbana, 1987); Grossman, *Land of Hope*; Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915–1945* (Bloomington, IN, 1992); Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900–1954* (Lawrence, KS, 1993); Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle, 1994); Kathryn Grover, *Make a Way Somehow: African-American Life in a Northern Community, 1790–1965* (Syracuse, NY, 1994); Kimberley L. Phillips, *AlabamaNorth: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915–45* (Urbana, 1999); Lillian Serece Williams, *Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York, 1900–1940* (Bloomington, IN, 1999); Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830–1915* (Urbana, 2000); Marcy S. Sacks, *Before Harlem: The Black Experience in New York City before World War I* (Philadelphia, 2006); Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill, 2007). In addition to these single-community studies, a handful of books deal with two or more northern communities: Spencer R. Crew, *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Elizabeth and Camden, N. J., 1860–1920* (New York, 1993); Myra B. Young Armstead, *"Lord, Please Don't Take Me in August": African Americans in Newport and Saratoga Springs, 1870–1930* (Urbana, 1999); Stephen A. Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil: African-American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765–1900* (Bloomington, IN, 1999); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 2004). A few article-length studies focus on migration to a single community: Fredric Miller, "The Black Migration to Philadelphia: A 1924 Profile," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 108 (July 1984): 315–50; Shirley J. Carlson, "Black Migration to Pulaski County, Illinois, 1860–1900," *Illinois Historical Journal* 80 (Spring 1987): 37–46; Blocker, "Black Migration to Muncie, 1860–1930."

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migrants chose that place in contrast to their place of origin or in preference to one or more stops along their way. The power of place is so strong that community studies almost never pursue those who try their place but choose to move on, and they rarely even acknowledge their existence. The central factor in migration is human choice, but by eliminating comparison from their research strategy at the outset, single-community studies reduce the scope of choice to those made after arrival. The best light they can shed on choice is to tell us about some consequences of some choices made by some people. Hence, whether or not they incorporate migration into their title, they are only tangentially about migration.

Studies of African Americans in a single state, whether of a net sending or a net receiving state, although they cannot link origins and destinations for interstate migrants, can do so for intrastate travelers. Their authors are thereby better equipped to track some migrant choices than those who conduct single-community research. The published state studies, although telling us much that is useful about economic change and political struggle, unfortunately suffer from one historical problem and a methodological stumbling block.[52] The early state studies were written before the bulk of community studies were published, and hence they were unable to benefit from comparison of the histories of communities within their states. Now that community studies have bloomed, state histories are less fashionable. The focus on African Americans, valuable as that was at the time the state histories were published and as it continues to be, generally has meant that their authors are unable to establish whether the population movements they describe were racially tinged or were part of larger movements in which European Americans also participated.

Although migration is not their primary focus, studies of racial violence can add a significant dimension to migration scholarship by mapping one of the possible causes of out-migration, correlating violence with mobility, and exploring the effects of mobility on levels of conflict. In a chapter of his book on the 1919 Chicago race riot, for example, William Tuttle insightfully described the Great Migration to the Windy City.[53] The most welcome contribution to

[52]Vernon L. Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865–1900* (1947; New York, 1965); Emma L. Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (1957; Bloomington, IN, 1993); David A. Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1865–1915* (Urbana, 1976); John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900–1920* (Urbana, 1977); Lester C. Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee, 1791–1970* (Knoxville, 1981); Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana, 1989); Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, ed. and completed by Lana Reugamer (Bloomington, IN, 2000); Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkeley, 2005); William W. Giffin, *African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915–1930* (Columbus, 2005).

[53]William M. Tuttle Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (1970; Urbana, 1996), 74–107.

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migration research by students of violence was made by sociologists Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck in the seventh chapter of their sophisticated quantitative analysis of southern lynching. Comparing the number of black lynching victims with the rate of African American out-migration across all the counties in ten southern states, Tolnay and Beck found that "blacks were more likely to leave areas in which lynchings were more common."[54] In addition, they argued that lynchings tended to decline as out-migration increased.[55] Another sociologist, James Loewen, has claimed that forms of racial harassment, including violence, account for what he calls the "'Great Retreat'—the withdrawal of African Americans from towns and counties across the United States to black ghettoes in large northern cities."[56] According to Loewen, the Great Retreat took place during the period from 1890 to the 1930s as African Americans were driven from, or prevented from entering, towns and suburbs across the United States outside of what he calls the "traditional South." Such studies should stimulate further research that takes migration its focus, rather than leaving it as a byproduct of investigation into one of its possible causes, a strategy that can be useful only up to a point.

Violence studies nevertheless offer an example of an interaction in which migration studies have benefited from rubbing up against a bordering area of scholarship. Another such case, but one with greater promise for the future, is immigration history. The best histories of immigration demonstrate how much can be learned through connecting sending places with receiving places.[57] A further step takes place when we conceive of both kinds of places, as well as the movement between or among them, as elements of communities. We take an even further step when we substitute "one place," the "other place," and the journey—or journeys—between or among them for the categories of "sending," "receiving," and "immigrant." When we follow this road, the border between migration history and immigration history begins to dissolve, and we contemplate a "broader tapestry of journeys . . . and . . . places connected by movement."[58]

[54]Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930* (Urbana, 1995), 231–32.

[55]George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and "Legal Lynchings"* (Baton Rouge, 1990), chs. 5–6, explores various African American responses to racial violence, but not migration. Among other modern violence studies, neither W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (Urbana, 1993), nor Michael J. Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (Urbana, 2004), investigates African American responses to lynching, although Brundage does this in "The Darien 'Insurrection' of 1899: Black Protest During the Nadir of Race Relations," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 74 (Summer 1990): 234–53.

[56]James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York, 2005), 47.

[57]Among many examples, one classic is Josef Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Romanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890–1950* (Cambridge, MA, 1975).

[58]Donna R. Gabaccia and James R. Grossman, "From U. S. Immigration History to a History of Continental Journeys" in Rodriguez, ed., *Repositioning North American Migration History*, 388–401 (quotations 390). See also Marc

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Individual-level comparisons represent a new tool, one made possible on a large scale by the availability of the IPUMS datasets. By comparing migrants in northern destinations with non-migrants in southern origins, we can isolate the census variables that distinguish one from another. Furthermore, by comparing migrants in northern destinations with non-migrants (or earlier migrants) in those destinations, we can begin to calculate the wages of migration.[59]

I have immodestly saved nearly to the last the category of regional studies of migration, to which my own book belongs, because I believe that at this time it represents the most fruitful avenue toward increasing our knowledge of this basic human behavior.[60] When properly conceived to include both sending and receiving regions, a regional framework will facilitate comparison among places that were more and less likely to send and to receive, thereby illuminating migrant choices. On a larger scale such linkage becomes unwieldy and on a smaller scale comparison, if possible, will be limited in scope. The size of the region does not matter so long as it includes both sending and receiving places. Therefore, a regional focus could be multi-state or intrastate. Leslie Schwalm's new book, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, demonstrates some of the wide-ranging possibilities of the former. Focusing on the Civil War migration into Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, Schwalm delineates how the migrants forced changes in race relations in a region where slavery had been illegal but tolerated. She makes excellent use of oral histories and memoirs, including Civil War pension records, and her analysis of the gendered dimension of the migration experience is especially acute.[61] A good example of an intrastate regional study is Louis Kyriakoudes's *The Social Origins of the Urban South*, which links Nashville, Tennessee, with its migration hinterland, Middle Tennessee. Kyriakoudes examines both black and white migration, notes cyclical and seasonal as well as linear

S. Rodriguez, "Introduction: Reconsidering Modern Continental Migration, Community, and Citizenship" in Rodriguez, ed., *Repositioning North American Migration History*, ix–xxiii. Historians of the Civil War, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era migrations will also benefit from the considerable research in progress on the Second Great Migration, a good recent example of which is Gregory, *Southern Diaspora*.

[59]For examples, see Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Wages of Migration: Jobs and Homeownership among Black and White Workers in Muncie, Indiana, 1920" in *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*, eds. Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui (Bloomington, IN, 1999), 115–38; Maloney, "African American Migration to the North" and "Migration and Economic Opportunity in the 1910s"; Stewart E. Tolnay, "Educational Selection in the Migration of Southern Blacks, 1880–1990," *Social Forces* 75 (Dec. 1998): 487–514; Tolnay, "The Great Migration Gets Underway"; Digman, "Which Way to the Promised Land?"

[60]Blocker, *A Little More Freedom*. Other regional studies of migration include Johnson, "Out of Egypt," and Leslie A. Schwalm, "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest," *Civil War History* 50 (June 2004): 145–74. Regional studies do seem to be gaining credence in the writing of African American history; see Trotter, *River Jordan*, and Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington, KY, 2006).

[61]Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*.

migration patterns, investigates racial and gender differences in migration choices and in work opportunities at origins and destination, and uses oral histories to good effect to examine social and cultural, as well as economic, motives for mobility.[62] A regional study that encompasses several states can incorporate the findings of intrastate regional studies such as Kyriacoudes's, as well as community and state studies, and will provide a major building block for an eventual national overview.

The last category I want to discuss is one that does not yet exist in actual scholarship. Lest you think that I have wishfully neglected the fact that the historical profession has taken a linguistic turn, I suggest that the migrations of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era present a potentially fruitful opportunity for linguistic analysis. This prospect resides in the many collections of oral histories created by African American migrants during the years from the heart of the migrations to the 1990s. I have published descriptions of those that pertain to the Lower Midwest, but some of these are more broadly based, and I am sure that others can be found scattered throughout various archives beyond the Midwest.[63] When oral histories take the form of interviews, both questions and responses, as well as interaction between interviewer and respondent, furnish material for rhetorical examination. Also, the long time span over which such records were created can make such analysis truly historical. A project analyzing migrant oral histories holds out a prospect of liberating linguistic analysis from its all-too-frequent confinement to elite sources and subjects.

To advance understanding of the significant migrations of the Civil War, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era, the best future studies of migration will adhere to the following principles. First, they will be comparative along multiple dimensions: between migrants and non-migrants; between places where migrants originated and places where people stayed put, and between places from which people moved north and places from which people moved south or west; between blacks and whites; between sexes and among age groupings and social classes; and among potential destinations. They will cover long time spans. They will devote

[62]Louis Kyriakoudes, *The Social Origins of the Urban South: Race, Gender, and Migration in Nashville and Middle Tennessee, 1890–1930* (Chapel Hill, 2003).

[63]Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Home Videos in Words: African-American Oral History Collections in Indiana Archives," *Black History News and Notes* 62 (Nov. 1995): 1–4; Blocker, "Grassroots Sources on African-American Migration and Life in the Lower Midwest," *SHGAPE Newsletter* 10 (Spring 2000): 8–9; Blocker, *A Little More Freedom*, app. C, 247–51. An outstanding collection of First Great Migration oral histories is Timuel D. Black Jr., *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Black Migration, An Oral History* (Evanston, IL, 2003).

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due attention to migration sequence. They will be quantitatively as sophisticated as the data allow. They will incorporate migrant perspectives, not only to illustrate points made based on other kinds of evidence, but, more importantly, to generate testable hypotheses. Additionally, they will focus on the essence of migration—movement—and the choices that migrants made and that made migrants.

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