

Introduction

Histories of Racism and Resistance, Seen and Unseen: How and Why to Think about the Jim Crow North

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In my travels in the North I was increasingly becoming disillusioned with the power structures there. . . . Many of them sat on platforms with all their imposing regalia of office to welcome me to their cities and showered praise on the heroism of Southern Negroes. Yet when the issues were joined concerning local conditions only the language was polite; the rejection was firm and unequivocal.¹

—Martin Luther King Jr., November 1965

The concentration upon the South . . . should not lead to the inference that the attitudes and policies described here were peculiar to the South. Indeed, if there were time and space, it would be a simple matter to point out the many parallel lines of prejudice and discrimination against the Negro in the North, prejudice that often worked as great a hardship upon the race as it did in the South.²

—C. Vann Woodward, 1955

Americans have been taught that Jim Crow's history lies in the South. The story begins in the 1880s and 1890s, when southern states, faced with interracial democracies that Reconstruction created, rewrote their constitutions to eliminate black people from civic life. "We came here to exclude the Negro," one Mississippi politician explained at the state's constitution convention in 1890. "Nothing short of this will answer."³

Racially segregated schools, voter registrar hours, buses, lunch counters, water fountains, hospitals, factories—even separate Bibles to swear upon, gallows to hang from, and, at least in Louisiana, asylums for blind people—followed.⁴ By the turn of the century, these laws entrenched segregation across the South. The Supreme Court of the United States sanctioned these laws. Terrorist violence punished dissidents who opposed, or resisted, the new racial order.⁵

The North, as the story goes, frowned upon the South's peculiarities, but turned a blind eye to that region's Jim Crow injustices; while imperfect, its own systems were open to change and racial progress. Courageous opponents of southern Jim Crow began to rise up against racism and white supremacy in the 1930s and 1940s, but it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that an intrepid movement of black people across the South, with help from northern black people, reached a crescendo. Thus began the heroic civil rights movement history that many Americans learn about in school. Southern blacks, with the help of a sympathetic media and northern white liberals, challenged racial segregation through a mass struggle, and the nation overthrew Jim Crow segregation. Amid these victories, in the late 1960s, northern black people, frustrated by their own lack of progress and supposedly lacking the community values and institutions that had undergirded the southern struggle, erupted in riots across the urban North. Popular narratives, student textbooks, Hollywood dramas, and documentaries tell this moving history of a triumphant southern movement and its northern demise.⁶

The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North tells different stories, seeking to reshape that dominant narrative. The essays in this volume shift our attention to histories of entrenched, endemic racism outside the South. In the liberal North, legal systems supported, and hid, practices of racial segregation. Robust fights against racism unfolded. People who dissented against the racial system were dismissed, disparaged, patronized, and punished. This anthology is part of a growing academic field that highlights the long history of northern racism and social movements that challenged northern racial discrimination and segregation.⁷ Yet, in popular memory, in national celebration, and even within parts of the historical profession, the southern narrative dominates the way we remember the era. The legacies of the Jim Crow North continue to influence contemporary political and social arenas, such as policing, housing,

education, and employment, but Americans know little about this history. The southern story continues to hold sway, in part because it makes racism a regional malady rather than a national cancer, expressed in violence and epithets rather than policy imperatives and political sway. A moving tale of good guys, bad guys, and successful endings, the popular story of Jim Crow and its defeat resounds as proof of the courage of individual Americans and the strength of U.S. democracy.

What we do know about the North, we do not associate with the term “Jim Crow.” Northern black activists, however, used this terminology regularly, and they repeatedly made comparisons to the South to disrupt the national tendency to see systematized racism only as a regional issue. Extending into every region, state, and community, Jim Crow was a crucial feature of national life. Its “strange careers” outside of the South need fuller incorporation in histories of the United States during the twentieth century.⁸

Jim Crow began in the North, not the South. Long before the Civil War, northern states like New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania had legal codes that promoted black people’s racial segregation and political disenfranchisement. While these northern Jim Crow laws predated the South’s, these racial systems never dominated or defined the region in a uniform way. Throughout the nineteenth century, black and white abolitionists and free black activists challenged the North’s Jim Crow practices, won some victories, waged war against slavery in the South and the North, and even changed some of the North’s racist laws in housing, voting, education, and marriage. Nonetheless, northerners wove Jim Crow racism into the fabric of their social, political, and economic life in ways that shaped the history of the region, and the entire nation. Jim Crow, outside of the South, coexisted, even thrived, alongside efforts to reform its worst manifestations in social and political life. This characteristic distinguished it from its southern version. A commonplace saying captured the two Jim Crows perfectly: in the South, black people could get close to white people, so long as they did not become too “uppity” by advocating for their social, political, or economic equality with whites. In the North, black people could get as “uppity” as they want—they could run successful businesses, consume luxury goods, and sit next to white people on the bus—so long as they did not try to get too close to whites, as their neighbors, sexual

partners, classmates, or union brothers. This aphorism's wisdom recognizes that Jim Crow, whether in the North or in the South, demanded that black people remain in their "place." The essays in this volume reveal this history of northern systems of racial segregation, as well as the resistance people mounted against them.⁹

Northerners sowed the nation's social soil with seeds of modern racism during the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. But the Jim Crow North metastasized during the mid-twentieth century. Black migration to northern metropolises increased while the New Deal expanded new forms of racialized citizenship. Over the course of the twentieth century, laws and policies cemented Jim Crow in northern housing, employment, education, and law-enforcement systems.¹⁰ Six million black people moved north and west between 1910 and 1970, seeking jobs, desiring education for their children, and fleeing racial terrorism. Some industrial jobs opened up for black workers. Everyday life in the North was different compared to the South. Blacks did not have to step off the sidewalk to let whites pass. Black citizens in the North in many places could vote. Public transportation was not, as a rule, segregated. We agree with other historians who have argued that "in some respects, the South did seem distinctive in privileging white supremacy" but we also argue that historical narratives of the Great Migration have tended to obscure the entrenched realities of northern racism.¹¹

An ideology that dated to the years before the Civil War framed the North as a "promised land." Rather than their own Canaan, a more apt metaphor, to use historian Vincent Harding's framing, was that black migrants found Pharaoh on both sides of the river.¹² The millions of black people who fled to the North attest to their hopefulness that this region would serve them better than their homeland in the South, but they did not escape American racism. Instead, they found a different form of it. Rosa Parks, who was forced to leave Montgomery in 1957 and settled in Detroit, called it the "Northern promised land that wasn't."¹³ Malcolm X, one of the greatest orator-theorists on the Jim Crow North, used the symbol of a predatory, straightforward wolf to represent southern racism and a sly, conniving fox to illustrate the trickiness of northern racism.¹⁴

New Deal policies, combined with white Americans' growing apprehension towards the migrants, created a raw deal for the country's black

people. Despite the ability of northern African Americans—in Chicago and Detroit—to elect black people to local offices as early as the late nineteenth century, and to the U.S. Congress during the 1930s, and despite the temporary relief the New Deal brought to the catastrophes blacks suffered during the Great Depression, public policies, from the Wagner Act to the 1935 Social Security Act to the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, wrote racial inequity and segregation into policy.¹⁵ And the black vote was often gerrymandered and diluted, making black political power in the North elusive.¹⁶ Faced with these new realities, black people relentlessly and repeatedly challenged northern racism. A major theme of this anthology concerns the way Jim Crow racism in northern life produced longstanding, multifaceted social movements that theorized, unveiled, and opposed northern forms of racial discrimination at their most systematic institutional and cultural levels.

A close examination of the history of the Jim Crow North demonstrates how racial discrimination and segregation operated as a system, upheld by criminal and civil courts, police departments, public policies, and government bureaucracies. Judges, police officers, school board officials, PTAs, taxpayer groups, zoning board bureaucrats, urban realtors and housing developers, mortgage underwriters, and urban renewal policy makers created and maintained the Jim Crow North. There did not need to be a “no coloreds” sign for hotels, restaurants, pools, parks, housing complexes, schools, and jobs to be segregated across the North as well.

Northerners who resisted desegregation took many forms. From the Northeast to the West Coast, some northern whites screamed “nigger” and “monkey” and “Go Back to Africa.” They posted signs reading “We want white tenants in our white community,” threw bananas and bottles, and used violence against black people who attempted to move into “their” neighborhoods or schools. Nonviolent protests in the summer of 1963 urging White Castle in the Bronx to hire more black people were met with Confederate flags, KKK hoods, and racist epithets.¹⁷ Following years of open housing advocacy in Milwaukee, a 1967 open housing march over the Sixteenth Street viaduct connecting the black North Side with white working-class Southside was attacked by a white mob spewing racial slurs; as historian Patrick Jones details, black and white Milwaukeeans then marched for two hundred consecutive nights and were consistently met with mobs of white people and regular appearances of the KKK and

neo-Nazis, along with an intractable city leadership.¹⁸ In Hartford, white activist Ned Coll and groups of schoolchildren attempting to desegregate Connecticut's beautiful beaches found "closed gates, slammed doors and threats of arrest," according to historian Andrew Kahrl.¹⁹

George Wallace, one of the most iconic figures of the Jim Crow South, found ample support in the North as well. When Wallace blocked the University of Alabama door in 1963, more than one hundred thousand letters streamed in from all over the country applauding his actions. "They all hate black people," Wallace realized. "All of them. They're all afraid, all of them. . . . The whole United States is Southern."²⁰ In 1968, when Wallace ran for president, he drew support in the Northeast and Midwest away from Hubert Humphrey and turned out overflow crowds from Boston to Madison Square Garden in what historian Dan Carter describes as "the largest political rally held in New York City since Franklin Roosevelt."²¹

But many northerners kept their distance from such tactics, deploring such hate-filled rhetoric and violence. At the same time, they employed the levers of policy, law, and bureaucracy to maintain segregation and racial privilege. Countless everyday actions, municipal, state, and federal policies, legal decisions, and byzantine bureaucracies created the scaffolding for a northern Jim Crow system that hid in plain sight. Northern Jim Crow practices often unfolded through so-called color-blind ideologies. The context of twentieth-century liberalism distinguished the Jim Crow North from the Jim Crow South. Northern Jim Crow evolved, in part, through New Deal and Great Society liberalism. Explanations for racial differences were rooted in arguments about culture and behavior, not biology. Claims to taxpayer rights, law and order, and anti-busing, not states' rights, became ideological rationales for hardening racial inequality within northern liberal societies. Black activists labored throughout the twentieth century to unmask and challenge these modes of Jim Crow ideology.

Defenders of the Jim Crow South often hid behind a brand of conservatism that they claimed reflected the rights of states to determine their own laws, and of individuals to choose their own social equals, because separation of the races, they believed, was good for individuals and society. Beyond the social order, defenders of southern Jim Crow sometimes argued that racial separation reflected the will of a Chris-

tian God who predetermined different social castes through biological distinctions. Many who believed in the rightness of Jim Crow in the South argued that criticisms of their ways of life only came from illegitimate, outside agitators—Communists, Jews, and uppity northern blacks—who riled up southern-born Negroes and sowed trouble where none existed. Still, other southerners who lacked overt racial animus felt afraid of racial integration, especially in public schools, or saw a need to balance the interests of emerging civil rights groups with those of White Citizens Councils. In truth, there was no single, unified way that American southerners thought about, or fought to protect, racial segregation.²² The idea that all southerners were white, or that all whites in the South were inveterate racists, is as much of a myth as the idea that all whites in the North were liberal, or that all liberals in the North were not racist. Seeing clearly the history of Jim Crow in the North not only helps Americans think differently about the North but also helps them to reconsider one-dimensional understandings of the South and southerners.

Through its promotion of universal affluence and social stability through individuals' industry, market economies, and democratic political systems, northern liberalism rejected southern defenses of their Jim Crow societies, but these northern attacks against the South's racial system regularly ignored the racism that defined the North. Defenders of the Jim Crow North relied upon color-blind ideology and notions of the North as a meritocracy to explain how and why pervasive inequality in their society mapped, almost perfectly, onto patterns of race and class. The same ideas they used to take down the South's brand of Jim Crow became ones that masked and perpetuated the Jim Crow North. They created and maintained a system of racial inequality—all the while denying it was a system. The South learned from this. Many of the hallmarks of the Jim Crow North were taken up in the South in the late twentieth century.²³

The New Deal and the Fair Deal opened some doors for black citizens, but they also embedded segregation in federal policy, and widened opportunity gaps. On top of that, expansions of putatively universal citizenship entitlements passed during this era made color-blind explanations for racial inequity a hallmark of mid-twentieth-century liberalism. Color-blindness blamed social inequality and lack of access on the motivations, choices, and culture of the individual, not on systems, insti-

tutions, or power structures. Northern liberals upheld the pretense of meritocracy while hoarding resources, power, and affluence in housing, schools, and city services. Defenders of the Jim Crow North turned the problem back onto black people: *What do you mean we are racist? Prove it. We don't see race. Our policies are color-blind. Why are you so angry? You're the racist because you obsess over race.* Such approaches made racism outside of the South harder to see.

Theories of a “culture of poverty” became the most effective way northerners justified their segregation. According to this theory, when faced with the structural inequities of northern cities and untethered from the religion, community institutions, and kinship that had characterized southern black life, northern black people developed a set of cultural behaviors and practices that impeded their economic and educational success.²⁴ Politically, they grew alienated and angry, unable to sustain movements and organizations like their southern brethren, and erupting in riots to express their disaffection. Such “cultural” arguments developed a powerful grip on northern journalists, scholars, and policy makers by affirming meritocracy, acknowledging structural inequality, and positing that the greatest barriers blacks now faced stemmed from their own behaviors, family structures, and cultural norms. Black behavior, not the social systems of racism, and racist northerners, became the focus for change. Thus black people bore the burden of fixing massive social inequities through their own individual efforts.

The national media, based largely in the North, maintained the mythologies that justified the Jim Crow North. By the 1960s, many national news sources had turned their attention to racism and struggle in the South. At the same time, they promoted ideologies of black people in the North as criminal and pathological and devoted much of their attention to in-depth stories plumbing life in the “ghetto.” Newspapers refrained from sustained coverage of northern racism *as* racism and often treated black activism in the North as deviant, disruptive, and irrelevant. They undercovered local movements and overcovered uprisings. This journalism largely framed the nation’s real racial problem, and noble struggle against it, as southern.

Given the centrality of “culture of poverty” justifications for masking and enabling northern inequality, black freedom movement activists and intellectuals attacked those analytical frameworks. Challenging the

myth that they lived in a color-blind world based on merit, the activists described in this book rejected the widespread argument that racism and segregation in the Jim Crow North was an anomalous accident transplanted from the South or that black behaviors and values were primarily what held black people back. Too much evidence from their lives communicated otherwise. Black activism thus becomes the chief historical lens through which to see the complexity of the Jim Crow North.

Building on two decades of scholarship, the essays in this book make three related interventions in order to shift the historiography of racism in this country.²⁵ Despite two decades of robust scholarship on the North, national commemorations, most history textbooks, and even much of the best public history on African American life and struggle still picture systematized segregation and the civil rights movement as largely southern.²⁶ And so, one of the questions we, and the authors of these chapters, asked was: why? Why do Americans, even people who immerse themselves in scholarship on racism, continue to maintain a southern story of Jim Crow if so much new research reveals the structural and systemic nature of northern racism? Using a Jim Crow frame reveals how northern racism worked as *a racial system* with its own ideologies, rules, cultures, and practices, refuting the idea that racism outside the South was haphazard, transplanted, or resulting from private prejudices. But there has been a reluctance to understand it for what it is: a Jim Crow system. So we use that framing explicitly and directly—to show how northern racism worked as a racial system, to demonstrate the various ways in which northern officials maintained it all the while denying it as a system, and to underline the breadth of northern black activism and how deep and wide white opposition to it was.

Second, unmasking Jim Crow in the North reveals the ways in which northern liberals created ideologies to defend their system, and deflect black movements, with defensive assertions that their cities *were not* the South. Rather than deal with their own racism honestly, northerners pivoted constantly by calling attention to problems in the South while defending and maintaining their own status quo. Northern liberals, including the northern liberal media, played a pivotal role in maintaining racial discrimination throughout the twentieth century while proclaiming their own openness and lack of racial bias. Liberalism created opportunities for some racial minorities to advance socially and economically,

but it also erected barriers against others, patronized and disparaged black activists, trumpeted examples of successful black people to justify no further intervention on matters related to racial inequity, and blamed those stuck in poverty or joblessness as individuals lacking the right character or cultural values to succeed.

Third, laying claim to a Jim Crow North takes seriously the ways generations of black writers and activists framed and theorized their own cities as places marred by “Jim Crow” policies. After years of study, investigation, and struggle, these activists mounted multiple resistance movements to challenge northern Jim Crow practices all the while being constantly asked to “prove” that there was even a problem. These essays return the history of activism against the Jim Crow North to a place of parity with the more well-known histories of racism and resistance in the American South.

In forwarding these three contentions, we recognize that Jim Crow operated differently from the East Coast to the Midwest to the West to the South. We do not argue that systems of racial segregation that developed in New York were mirror images of those that developed in Los Angeles, or that they were the same as those in Little Rock, Arkansas, or Jackson, Mississippi, for that matter. We also do not contend that uniform practices and ideologies defined the Jim Crow North. For example, the ideologies and practices that propped up New York City’s racial system were not the same as those that developed four hours north of Gotham in a place like Rochester, New York. We use the plural, “strange careers,” to foreground the ways Jim Crow took many forms, had many guises, and burrowed into the law in many ways. Journalists, politicians, policy makers, and citizens who denied the existence of Jim Crow in their own northern metropolises shared a common investment in a claim of racial innocence, in *not* being the South. They protected their own racial system through denying its existence and differentiating it from the South’s.

Despite widespread patterns of racism in their housing, employment, police departments, and public schools that were supported, maintained, and defended through law and policy, whites living in the West, Midwest, and Northeast defended their society’s race relations as more enlightened, open, and democratic than those that existed in the Jim Crow South. And so we use the term “North” in its historic sense to en-

compass all the places not the South and to take on this longstanding dichotomy northerners invested in between the “Jim Crow South” and the “liberal North.” Doing so denies the protective cover that the idea of an exceptionally racist South long gave to practices and ideas that stretched deep into northern and western social, political, economic, and cultural history. Given the ways this historical reality and its contemporary effects still shape life throughout the nation, rooting out racial segregation from American life requires a more sober examination of Jim Crow’s national scope and depth.

Such an examination is increasingly urgent today. Americans can see the effects of mid-twentieth-century racism—the racial ghettos, the incredibly disproportionate incarceration rates, the underfunded black public schools, the wealth gap, and the shorter average life span for American blacks regardless of their class or education—but the causes of this historic racism remain, largely, hidden in plain sight behind a veil of color-blind, meritocratic ideology. Americans like their racism, and their racists, southern and conservative, not northern and liberal. The idea that a system of segregation and inequality was propagated and maintained in the North—and largely survived despite a myriad of movements—demands a different reckoning from Americans today. To see the history that made the American ghetto, the prison industrial complex, the racial wealth gap, and the crisis in urban education today is to see how the Jim Crow North thrived through explanations that blamed the victims of racism for the causes *and* the effects of racism. Arcane bureaucracies, convoluted processes, and interminable, ineffective committees powered the social and political engines that produced northern Jim Crow systems—but proved easy to ignore and excuse amid the proclamations of fairness and color-blindness. Perhaps most important, we cannot, or do not, see the history of the Jim Crow North because our scholarship and policy makers have long dismissed the critiques and protests that northern black activists made about the origins, causes, effects of, and solutions for the social conditions in which they lived.

The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North

To understand the Jim Crow North, we must look at its origins. Jim Crow segregation began in the North, then moved to the South. The

early history of the Jim Crow North carries all of the hallmarks we associate with southern Jim Crow: segregation written into law, upheld by the court, and maintained by violence. It also contains distinctiveness: segregation constructed, and denied, through the bulwark of American liberal policy and thought, moments of social progress that morphed into new modes of racist prejudices and practices.

Most narrative histories of southern Jim Crow highlight how northern Republicans abandoned efforts to promote civil and economic equality for black citizens in the South after 1877 because, in the words of one popular textbook, the GOP “had other fish to fry.”²⁷ By the last decade of the nineteenth century, when Jim Crow laws took hold in the South, the nation turned a blind eye to southern racism. For decades, Americans viewed Jim Crow and all its southern horrors as regional eccentricities. In deference to states’ rights, national reconciliation, and the power of southerners in Congress, and because many white Americans were white supremacists, the federal government proved unable, or unwilling, to stop these peculiar practices. Failures to pass antilynching legislation in Congress, legislative reappropriation of Native American tribal lands into the hands of individual Indians, harsh restrictions against immigrants from China and Japan, and passive acceptance of the practical annulment of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments throughout Dixie led one historian to conclude that by about 1900, “[T]he Southern way had become the American way.”²⁸

Despite this commonly accepted narrative, a closer look at policies, attitudes—and even lynching—in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows how the North led the nation in systemized racial injustice. Around the time of the American Revolution, as free blacks and fugitives from slavery populated northern cities, political and legal restrictions on black life increased. Racial segregation and public exclusion grew. In the late eighteenth century, for example, black citizens petitioned Boston’s city government for redress because their skin color denied them access to state-sponsored schools. Whites and blacks in Boston paid taxes, but only whites could attend public schools. The Commonwealth ignored their plea.²⁹ In 1850, in Massachusetts, the Roberts family went to court so that five-year-old Sarah could attend a closer, whites-only school. The Massachusetts Supreme Court threw out the case, but the Supreme Court, in its 1896 case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, cited the Roberts case as a legal

precedent that justified separate facilities. Similarly, Pennsylvania passed a law in 1854 mandating segregated schools for blacks. On March 17, 1855, the Massachusetts legislature passed, and the governor signed, a bill that prohibited racial or religious distinctions in public school admissions, but the damage to American jurisprudence (and northern white expectations) had already been done.³⁰ Boston schools struggled with Jim Crow racism all the way through the twentieth century,³¹ and Jim Crow moved from the North to the South, from northern state courts to the highest court in the nation.³²

The Jim Crow North expanded with the nation. When states such as Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York abolished slavery, northern legislatures often instituted gradual manumission laws that bound black people to service for a generation, privileged slave owners' rights to compensation and reparation, and simultaneously placed strict limitations on blacks' citizenship. New York rewrote its state constitution after 1827 to restrict black male suffrage and all but eliminated blacks' service on juries (only sixteen black men in the state qualified). Blacks could also not ride on city streetcars, and they were segregated on the ferries that ran between Brooklyn and Manhattan.³³ Racial segregation spread west into new territories and states. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin outlawed slavery, but restricted black settlement and enshrined official discrimination against black people.³⁴

As more blacks became free people in the North, and white northerners adjusted to sharing citizenship and public space with more black people, mechanisms of social distinction grew. When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in 1831, he observed that "[t]he prejudice of race appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists; and nowhere is it so intolerant as in those states where servitude has never been known."³⁵ The word "nigger" as a derogatory term for all black people first gained political, cultural, and social currency in the Jim Crow North, the historian Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor shows, "precisely at the moment when gradual abolition and emancipation began to free people of color in the North." In the 1820s and '30s, white northerners used the word "nigger" to describe all black people "as backward and beyond redemption . . . incapable of achieving real freedom and citizenship." Blacks in the antebellum North who entered interracial public spaces experienced the word "nigger" as

an epithet that connoted violence, claimed space, and indicated that the northern public sphere belonged to whites only. Future generations of southern whites used the word “nigger” in similar ways.³⁶

Beyond vile epithets and cultural entertainments such as minstrelsy, which found their greatest purchase in the urban North,³⁷ the Jim Crow North manifested in virulent policies and violent practices. Before the Civil War, many cities and towns in the Midwest passed measures to disenfranchise black people, restrict black settlement, and segregate schools and town services.³⁸ The tactics of racial violence and intimidation ran through the North. Before white southerners lynched more than four thousand people from the 1880s through the 1960s, nineteenth-century white northerners, especially Irish immigrants and American-born, ethnically Irish citizens, used lynching to protect racialized notions of citizenship, manhood, labor, community, and criminal justice against expanding notions of free labor ideology, and state bureaucracy. According to historian Michael Pfeifer, in New York and Wisconsin, “[N]orthern Irish Americans in the Civil War used strategies of racial violence that would also be employed by white Southerners in Reconstruction. Urban Irish Catholics were, then, innovators as they were among the first white Americans to lynch free blacks in a society organized around principles of free labor.”³⁹ Just as using the term “nigger” as a way to keep black American citizens in their place and mark their subordinate position moved from the Jim Crow North to the Jim Crow South, and from the post-emancipation era of the 1820s and ’30s to the postbellum era, so too did the promotion of racial terrorism through lynching practices.

Northerners adapted their Jim Crow practices to conform to the political, economic, and social changes that the end of slavery brought to national life. The North also had to adjust to a national Constitution that recognized black citizens’ equality before the law. “Despite the rapid toppling of traditional racial barriers,” Eric Foner argues, “the North’s racial Reconstruction proved in many respects less far reaching than the South’s.”⁴⁰ During and after Reconstruction, northern unions barred blacks.⁴¹ In language that would echo across the decades, northerners during Reconstruction argued that black citizens’ behavior, not whites’ racism, or even legal protection, did the most to effect black social advancement. Despite laws in many states declaring formal equality, white northerners used segregation practices to deny blacks equal chances at

jobs and housing. They justified these practices with arguments that black people did not act right, and that their poor behavior caused their misfortune. According to 1867 editors of the pro-unionist liberal magazine *The Nation*, legislation could not reverse the “great burden” that weighed upon black people, a burden that came, not from white racism, but from black people’s “want of all ordinary claims to social respectability.”⁴²

Midwestern states that had barred black settlement in their original constitutions also reacted to national protections for black citizenship with violence and intimidation. After the Civil War, sundown towns proliferated across the Midwest and West. Such towns kept African Americans out by law, force, or custom and were so named because some posted signs reading, “Nigger Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on You in [name of municipality].” Many such towns had an early black population that was summarily removed. Five hundred and seven sundown towns existed in Illinois alone, where black people were banished, or forcibly evicted.⁴³

The rejuvenation of the KKK during the early twentieth century—what historian Linda Gordon refers to as the “northern Klan”⁴⁴—demonstrated the national appeal of white supremacy. Largely defunct for forty years, the KKK was reborn in 1915 in part due to the success of D. W. Griffith’s film *Birth of a Nation*—the first film ever to be screened in the White House. By the 1920s, Klan membership had skyrocketed, not just in the old Confederacy but also in Indiana, Oregon, Kansas, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Washington, Ohio, and California, their ranks swollen with middle-class white women and men. Members claimed the mantel of patriotism and white Protestantism against immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and blacks, sought legislation and political office, controlled many churches and positions of law enforcement, and numbered five million. In 1925, more than fifty thousand Klansmen were cheered as they marched through the streets of Washington, DC.⁴⁵ In New York City, in 1927, one thousand Klansmen marched through Jamaica, Queens, and clashed with police officers. Fred C. Trump, father of future U.S. president Donald J. Trump, was one of seven “be-robed” people arrested at that parade for fighting against law enforcement or, in Trump’s case, “refusing to disperse.”⁴⁶

Thus, Jim Crow was not an exceptional social, economic, legal, and cultural system that defined the South during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jim Crow had a national history and scope that

originated in the North in the Revolutionary era, and grew there in even more powerful ways during the mid-twentieth century.

Revisiting Woodward

There is probably no historical scholarship more pivotal to cementing an understanding of the Jim Crow South than C. Vann Woodward's best-selling 1955 book, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*.⁴⁷ Part of the book's power came from its argument that recent historical events, not timeless, inevitable, unchanging traditions, had created southern segregation. Woodward located the Jim Crow South's origins in the 1880s and 1890s. While powerful and important, his argument ended up reinforcing the notion that American segregation and disfranchisement were a regional problem. His cursory treatment of the North stemmed from his limited knowledge on the subject, as he made clear, and "not on the mistaken assumption that Jim Crow disappeared in the North after the Civil War."⁴⁸

In the 1966 reprint, Woodward added a new first chapter, "Of Old Regimes and Reconstructions." "Segregation in complete and fully developed form," Woodward argued, "did grow up contemporaneously with slavery, but not in its midst. One of the strangest things about the career of Jim Crow was that the system was born in the North and reached an advanced age before moving South in force."⁴⁹ By the 1830s, with slavery abolished in the North, and gradual manumission laws in place, thirty-five hundred black people remained in bondage throughout the region. Free black citizens in the North, however, had freedom of movement (in states that did not bar black settlement) and freedom to engage in contracts for work, and, perhaps most important, blacks' children were not bound to a state of slavery. "For all that," Woodward argued, "the Northern Negro was made painfully and constantly aware that he lived in a society dedicated to the doctrine of white supremacy and Negro inferiority."⁵⁰ Few, if any, northern politicians challenged this reality of American racism. Instead, the "system permeated all aspects of Negro life in the free states by 1860," Woodward wrote: from transportation conveyances to theaters and lecture halls. In hotels, restaurants, and resorts, blacks were barred as customers, but not as servants; white Christian churches had "Negro pews"; and blacks who worshiped with whites had to receive Holy Communion separately from them. Blacks

were “educated in segregated schools,” Woodward wrote, “punished in segregated prisons, nursed in segregated hospitals, and buried in segregated cemeteries.”⁵¹

Some of the most entrenched segregation in the North happened in urban residential patterns, as Woodward demonstrates. In 1847, “not a single colored family” lived in South Boston, Woodward noted. Boston had its “Nigger Hill” and “New Guinea” for black residents. Cincinnati had “New Africa,” as did New York and Philadelphia, at a time, Woodward demonstrates, when Richmond, Virginia, Charleston, South Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana, lacked such blacks-only residential districts. Racial segregation was harsher in the West, Woodward argued. In the places where blacks could vote, only 6 percent of northern blacks lived. Custom or law also prevented blacks from serving on juries in the North.⁵² As Woodward summarized, “It is clear when its victory was complete and the time came, the North was not in the best possible position to instruct the South, either by precedent and example, or by force of conviction, on the implementation of what eventually became one of the professed war aims of the Union cause: racial equality.”⁵³ In the 1880s and 1890s, northern publications, such as the *Nation*, *Harper’s Weekly*, the *North American Review*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, regularly printed “the shibboleths of white supremacy regarding the Negro’s innate inferiority, shiftlessness, and hopeless unfitness for full participation in the white man’s civilization.”⁵⁴

Woodward’s own work shows the importance of the research that produced the essays in this volume. Part of our goal in this anthology joins Woodward’s mission from years ago: to show how Americans created and maintained a northern system of segregation and racial injustice through specific historical circumstances, policies, laws, and actions, not as byproducts of southern decisions, private practices, or chance events; and thus to show how such a system can be dismantled and democracy can rise in its place.

New Deal Jim Crow and the Katznelson Thesis

In many twentieth-century northern cities, as black migration surged, racial segregation hardened and worsened. In the expanded social citizenship it created, the New Deal also encoded a new kind of Jim Crow

citizenship, as political historian Ira Katznelson's *When Affirmative Action Was White* shows.⁵⁵ In a similar way that C. Vann Woodward demystified the seemingly natural history of racism in the South, Ira Katznelson has also shown how histories of racial preferences, instituted by the government and embedded deeply within public policies, benefited white Americans by expanding their ranks in the middle class and protecting their wealth. In multiple ways—from Federal Housing Administration (FHA) policies that rated neighborhoods for residential and school racial homogeneity to the ways Aid to Dependent Children carved a requirement for “suitable homes” to arcane policies that blamed black “cultural deprivation” for social disparities—segregation and inequality worsened after the New Deal of the 1930s. But by laying it at the feet of southern congressmen, Katznelson's analysis misses the northern agency and investment in institutionalizing these racial hierarchies, as well as the modern roots of the Jim Crow North.

In his powerful interpretations of the New Deal's racial history, and its national effects, Katznelson argues that the expansion of social citizenship under the New Deal created “affirmative action for whites.”⁵⁶ In perhaps the most far-reaching expansion of social citizenship since the end of the Civil War, federal New Deal policies provided loans for homes, underwrote racially exclusive suburban development, expanded higher education opportunities for veterans, granted Social Security entitlements, and protected unions for certain jobs. Katznelson shows how, by design, all of these social welfare policies benefited white citizens, stabilized and increased the ranks of the white middle class, distributed more wealth among white working- and middle-class citizens, and largely excluded blacks and Latinos.

Katznelson blames the racial discrimination baked into New Deal policies on the political machinations of racist southern Democrats. If the Woodward thesis contends that Jim Crow did not arise in the years that immediately followed the end of the Civil War, but instead waited until after Reconstruction, the Katznelson thesis argues that Jim Crow spread throughout government institutions, and created generational inequality through the actions of racist southern Democrats.⁵⁷ These southern congressmen held New Deal and Fair Deal legislation hostage through their tremendous power in Congress. “Without the South,” Katznelson argued, “there could have been no New Deal.”⁵⁸ Katznelson

does not absolve Roosevelt, northern Democrats, or New Deal liberals from complicity and “pragmatic forgetfulness” in allowing the South to manipulate New Deal and Fair Deal social welfare policies at the expense of black citizens. But Katznelson concludes, “[I]t was the white South that acted as the key agent in Congress”⁵⁹—ensuring the maintenance of racial segregation and job hierarchies, promoting the local control of federal social welfare policies, like Social Security, and blocking antidiscrimination statutes from infecting progressive programs and policies. “When southern members of Congress controlled the gateways to legislation,” Katznelson wrote, “policy decisions dealing with welfare, work and war either excluded the vast majority of African Americans or treated them differently from others.”⁶⁰

Katznelson emphasizes that northern Democrats and Republicans complied with the white southern oligarchy to build Jim Crow into the fabric of New Deal liberalism. His analysis of northern liberals’ corrupt bargain to pass New Deal legislation at the expense of racial equality, however, promotes an imbalanced view of the way New Deal liberalism enabled inequality that already existed in the Jim Crow North and the proactive investments of northern politicians in these racialized practices. Liberals did not just bite their tongues and wince while southern racists built Jim Crow through New Deal legislation. They too had a stake in local control and embraced their own forms of Jim Crow racism that had nothing to do with the South.

In her book *The Segregated Origins of Social Security*, Mary Poole demonstrates how a consortium of northern and southern interests, not merely southern congressmen, influenced the racialized shape of the 1935 Social Security Act. University of Wisconsin–trained researchers, who dominated the Committee on Economic Security, infused racially exclusionary practices into the legislation. “African Americans were not denied the benefits of Social Security because of the machinations of southern congressional leadership,” Poole argues. “The Act was made discriminatory through a shifting web of alliances of white policymakers that crossed regional and political parties. The members of the group that wielded the greatest influence on these developments were not southerners in Congress but President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s own people . . . who genuinely sought to build a fairer and better world, . . . but whose vision was steeped in racial privilege.”⁶¹

Northerners too seized upon the local control to maintain their own racial prerogatives. Northern and western legislators built a weak structure around the state-level Fair Employment Practices Committees and antidiscrimination commissions that proliferated in the Northeast and Midwest during the 1940s.⁶² They created structures of inequality and exclusion through the New Deal's protections of county-level administrators of federal welfare benefits. While the Katznelson thesis does a great deal to show how color consciousness, not color-blindness, defined the New Deal and the Fair Deal, his arguments do not account for the ways Jim Crow racism spread throughout states and counties where no southern Democrats held sway—why local control produced even more segregation in the North.⁶³ The Katznelson thesis also does little to explain why FHA and Home Owners' Loan Corporation surveyors used assumptions about the supposed primacy of white racial homogeneity to structure investment ratings systems throughout northern, midwestern, and western cities. By funneling the flow of investment capital and development dollars away from metropolitan communities where black people lived to suburbs and segregated housing developments from Levittown to Bensonhurst, those assessments provided the legalized underpinnings that created racial ghettos in mid-twentieth-century American cities.⁶⁴

The thrust of this anthology thus differs from the arguments of scholars like Ira Katznelson and Jason Sokol who, while noting how northern liberalism coexisted with northern racism, do not emphasize its proactive racial politics. Jason Sokol's synthesis history of racial politics of the Northeast, *All Eyes Upon Us*, argues for the North's "conflicted soul" when he writes that "the Northeast has been, and remains, the most American of regions" not "because it is a glittering model of freedom and democracy" but "because the Northeast has long held genuine movements for racial democracy, and for racial segregation, within the same heart."⁶⁵ Yet, liberalism provided significant cover for northern forms of racial inequality by defending its racial prerogatives and aggressively demonizing black activism.⁶⁶ Like Katznelson, Sokol fails to deal with the Jim Crow North as a racial system that grew strong from perpetuating its own racism and its claims to racial innocence.

Sokol's argument places northern racism on a continuum of southern racism but without the same moral absolutes. "The North had few Bull Connors or Jim Clarks, few swaggering sheriffs who had built en-

tire careers out of brutalizing black people,” writes Sokol. “The dearth of such villains made for an absence of moral absolutes. There would be no Selmas of the North.” We argue that the North *did* have its Selmas. Sokol’s contention overlooks the ideologies of the time that liberals used to obscure their own racial wickedness. They rationalized their own racial inequities as venial when compared with the South’s sins. They turned individual culture and behavior into explanatory causes of pervasive social inequities. They had become so adept at making excuses for their own racism that they often ignored, for decades, even the most blatant examples of Jim Crow in the North. As Martin Luther King Jr. observed in 1965, “As the nation, Negro and white, trembled with outrage at police brutality in the South, police misconduct in the North was rationalized, tolerated, and usually denied.”⁶⁷ Northern liberals pointed to the beams and branches of racism that existed in southerners’ eye, and in doing so, deflected attention—especially their own attention—away from the splinters, sticks, and boughs lodged in their own sockets.

The North had many Bull Connors: judges, prosecutors, entire police departments that committed countless instances of harassment, brutality, and kangaroo courts that overcriminalized black people while covering up police brutality throughout the Jim Crow North’s ghettos. There were also many such dramatic confrontations: Milwaukee’s open housing marches that drew mobs of angry whites; the killing of civil rights activist Bruce Klunder at a school protest in Cleveland; the growing confrontations between Boston’s civil rights movement and its School Committee; the police killing of Nation of Islam secretary Ron Stokes outside his LA mosque in 1962 and the actions of LAPD Chief William H. Parker.⁶⁸ The key difference was not the injustice, nor the level of black struggle, nor the level of white resistance to change. The main difference between the regions was an unwillingness of the nation to understand its race problem as national and to see that those who would protect and defend racial injustice came in many different guises.

“[A]lthough the North had no terrible bridges to march across, and no mass protest that riveted the nation,” Sokol continues, “it came to possess something almost as incredible: a black senator.”⁶⁹ Part of Jim Crow North’s staying power was also that liberals could point to “black firsts” like Edward Brooke as a senator of Massachusetts and say, “See? Progress.” Meanwhile, in spite of these black firsts, the “not segregated”

schools in Boston and Springfield stayed segregated for decades, and worsened in the ways they failed to educate black students and confined them to overcrowded, underresourced, and often decrepit schools. Through the ideology of liberal color-blindness, black students and their families became responsible for perpetuating their own underachievement through their insufficient motivation and their lack of value for education and deferred gratification.

Focusing on Jackie Robinson, Edward Brooke, Shirley Chisholm, David Dinkins, and Deval Patrick, Sokol only cursorily mentions grassroots activists like Ruth Batson, Ellen Jackson, Mae Mallory, and Ella Baker who labored for years to call out the Jim Crow North, faced down city officials who hamstrung their activism, became mired in studies and commissions to prove there was a problem, experienced disparagement by the media, and deflected red-baiting by many public officials. By giving short shrift to the perspectives of these activists and the ways they framed northern injustice and hypocrisy, both Katznelson and Sokol miss the proactiveness of northern racism, the extent of black struggle to challenge it, and the cunningly effective fictions of “color-blindness,” “crime,” and “culture” that provided the ideological rubrics to maintain it.

Indeed, modern liberal urban governance and the growth of northern cities in the early twentieth century were inseparable from race. In *Managing Inequality*, Karen Miller has documented how “color-blind” discourses originated in the early twentieth century among northern white political leaders eager to distinguish their municipal leadership as modern and progressive, maintained segregationist urban structures, and deflected black demands for change.⁷⁰ “Northern racial liberalism,” Miller contends, “is the notion that all Americans, regardless of race, should be politically equal, but that the state cannot and indeed should not enforce racial equality by interfering with existing social or economic relations.”⁷¹ In early-twentieth-century Detroit, political leaders would claim this liberalism to simultaneously assert their administration’s color-blindness and maintain practices that produced segregation, dismissing black people who pointed them out. Similarly, historian Khalil Muhammad outlines how crime statistics, migration patterns, and discourses of law and order “were woven together into a cautionary tale about the exceptional threat black people posed to modern society,” fueling a regime of punishment that flourished in early-twentieth-

century northern cities while providing the acceptable veneer for their “Jim Crow Justice.”⁷²

Increasingly in the post–World War II era, many northern liberal politicians, citizens, and news outlets would push for change in the South while endeavoring to protect segregation at home. Martin Luther King Jr.’s quotation, which begins this introduction, zeroes in on this double standard; King took to the pages of the *Saturday Review* a few months after the Watts uprising to highlight longstanding resistance to change in cities like LA, despite years of local black protests. Looking at New York City’s school desegregation movement and how white resistance to it determined the shape and passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is instructive. In the decade after *Brown*, New York City had witnessed a growing movement in the city insisting that *Brown* must be upheld in New York, and demanding a comprehensive desegregation plan from the Board of Education. Over and over, in the decade after *Brown*, grassroots activists and local parents confronted school officials over the inequities in their children’s schooling. They picketed, attended PTA meetings, took their kids out of school, and wrote letters but were deflected, dismissed, and denied. After a decade of struggle with little change, the city’s black community was at its limit. On February 3, 1964, 460,000 students and teachers boycotted the city schools because of their refusal to even come up with a comprehensive desegregation plan. The *New York Times* called the February school boycott “unreasonable and unjustified” and “violent.”⁷³ White parents were terrified—and so the next month, a much, much smaller group of white people, not even fifteen thousand, mostly white mothers, marched over the Brooklyn Bridge to protest the Board’s exceedingly modest plan to desegregate just sixty schools through school pairings. Opposition to civil rights activism was fierce and widespread in New York. In a poll conducted by the *New York Times*, a majority of white New Yorkers in 1964 said the civil rights movement had gone too far. Respondents spoke of black people receiving “everything on a silver platter” and of “reverse discrimination” against whites. Nearly half said that picketing and demonstrations hurt black people’s cause.⁷⁴

Their congressmen heard their pleadings, as historian Matthew Delmont demonstrates; the coverage of the (white) mothers’ march played as the backdrop of congressional debates around the Civil Rights Act.⁷⁵ In drafting the act, mindful of their white constituents back home, the

bill's northern and western liberal sponsors like Brooklyn congressman Emanuel Celler okayed a loophole to keep federal civil rights enforcement of school desegregation away from the North (they wanted to keep federal education dollars and their racially imbalanced schools). They amended Title IV, section 401b to read, "Desegregation' means the assignment of students to public schools and within such schools without regard to their race, color, religion, or national origin, but *'desegregation' shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance*" (emphasis added).⁷⁶

The intentions of northern and western congressmen were clear at the time, even though this reality has largely been lost to history. Southern politicians noted the hypocrisy of the bill's supporters in carving out this loophole for their own schools. Praising New York's senators as "pretty good segregationists at heart," Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland noted, "I do not blame the two distinguished Senators from New York for their desire to protect New York City, as well as Chicago, Detroit, and similar areas. But why should they attempt to penalize our part of the country?"⁷⁷ And the loophole worked—providing cover from Chicago to Boston to maintain their segregated schools and their federal money. Contextualizing why many African American communities rioted the summer after the bill passed, civil rights organizer Bayard Rustin observed, "People have to understand that although the civil-rights bill was good and something for which I worked arduously, there was nothing in it that had any effect whatsoever on the three major problems Negroes face in the North: housing, jobs, and integrated schools. . . . [T]he civil-rights bill, because of this failure, has caused an even deeper frustration in the North."⁷⁸

Returning Black Agency: How Recent Work on Northern Inequality Largely Misses Northern Black Activism

This anthology also insists that, alongside examining how the Jim Crow North worked as a system, we need to see the variety of ways black people theorized, unveiled, subverted, and challenged it at the time. Groundbreaking work from writers like Ta Nehisi Coates, Isabel Wilkerson, and Nikole Hannah-Jones has documented, for wide audiences, the northern practices and structures that entrenched housing

segregation, exacerbated school segregation, and hardened Jim Crow in policing and criminal justice in northern cities.⁷⁹ These writers powerfully demonstrate the relentless and evolving nature of racism that shaped and influenced northern black life in the twentieth century. But a common and significant flaw in their work—and in many of the public commemorations of civil rights movement and the fiftieth anniversaries of the Detroit, Watts, and Newark uprisings as well—is a superficial examination of the deep and wide organizing and theorizing northern black people, and their allies, did to challenge such practices.⁸⁰

Seeing the multitude of tactics northern black people employed, the many organizations they built, the numbers of rallies, sit-ins, and meetings they held shows how black writers and activists were theorizing and challenging these issues all the time. It also reveals how hard northern whites fought to maintain the status quo. By not centering the ways northern black intellectuals and activists have long formulated ways to highlight and oppose northern segregation and exclusion, these writers hew, however inadvertently, to the idea that black urban communities could not or did not recognize, articulate, and challenge what was happening because they possessed a weaker character and frailer community values than their southern brethren. Highlighting the structures and practices of the Jim Crow North without also highlighting northern black activism maintains a fiction that northern black people were too alienated and disorganized to build movements—a key misapprehension that has blinded us to northern movements for racial justice since their first days. By marginalizing this longstanding activism, these major public intellectuals also miss documenting how deep and wide white resistance was in the North (including by people who pushed for change in the South). When northern white people faced a host of local movements for racial justice, they labored just as hard to protect racial segregation and discrimination, albeit at times using different methods, as whites did in the South.

Similarly, the new Legacy Museum in Montgomery that accompanies the Equal Justice Initiative's searing lynching memorial, along with its reports on lynching and segregation, powerfully trace the lines from slavery to Jim Crow lynching and segregation to contemporary mass incarceration. As EJI president Bryan Stevenson eloquently explains, "I want to get to the point where we experience something more like free-

dom. . . . I don't think we are going to get there until we create a new consciousness about our history." Yet the museum and EJI's "Segregation in America" report glances over the northern movement. And, it fundamentally ignores opposition to the civil rights movement outside of the South. This oversight neglects a crucial portion of how racial inequality operated throughout the nation.⁸¹ By not foregrounding this northern history of struggle, even some of the most hard-hitting analyses of American racism by Ta Nehisi Coates, Isabel Wilkerson, Nikole Hannah-Jones, and the Equal Justice Initiative miss crucial dimensions of American history that help show the present more clearly.

Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking book *The New Jim Crow* highlights what she terms "the new Jim Crow"—the ways criminalization and mass incarceration fueled by the War on Drugs have denied millions of black people rights in housing, voting, and jobs: "I came to see that mass incarceration in the United States had, in fact, emerged as a stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system of racialized social control that functions in a manner strikingly similar to Jim Crow."⁸² Following the successes of the civil rights movement, not only did racial discrimination infect law enforcement and the courts, Alexander explains, but a destructive *system* of criminalization and incarceration evolved to accelerate racial segregation and political and economic disfranchisement, in ways replicating the Jim Crow South. Alexander is correct, but this anthology reminds readers that creating a system of segregation and oppression through law and policy without explicit racial invocations is an age-old northern strategy. Justifications for a racial caste system "through the lens of popular social science" is far older than the War on Drugs; rather, it follows from culture-of-poverty theories that justified northern inequality by criminalizing and blaming black behavior across the twentieth century. Black northerners have spent the century highlighting and challenging this culture-of-poverty framing. This is not merely semantics: the new Jim Crow is merely the old Jim Crow. Understanding this racial system necessitates seeing its roots in modern American liberalism; it requires understanding how this system lay at the heart of the creation of the modern American metropolis, was fortified through liberals' defining their cities as *not-the-South*, gained steam after World War II made cultural explanations the necessary ways for liberals to talk about race, and was challenged by black people across the twentieth century.⁸³

Expanded Jim Crow systems of northern racial segregation confined black citizens to American ghettos; criminalized the spaces where they lived and learned and played; denied them schooling that would make college possible, and then turned around and refused to hire them; imprisoned hundreds of thousands of people; extracted resources from their schools; plundered their property-based wealth; allowed a rapacious, lucrative drug economy to flourish; and supported victim-blaming ideologies that laid the burden for all of these social ills at the foot of urban black people's behavior and cultures.⁸⁴ Too often, when black activists, writers, and parents pointed this out, they were treated as crazy, dangerous, and potentially Communist. The difficulty of seeing the Jim Crow North and the disregarding of the long and varied movements that took place across the Northeast, Midwest, and West was a "structured blindness," to use philosopher Charles Mills's formulation, "in no way *accidental*, but *prescribed*."⁸⁵

This blindness was a blindness of the time, corresponding not only to northerners' investments in deflecting scrutiny of their own racism but also to U.S. global interests. Hoping to win the allegiances of the Third World, the United States sought to cast racism as a regional anachronism rather than a national condition while portraying those who highlighted the systems of racial injustice outside the South (from Malcolm X to Mae Mallory to Milton Galamison) as dangerous and un-American. Increasingly the United States showcased the southern movement to highlight the power of American democracy to reform its own regional troublespots—holding up American liberalism as the country's identity. News of southern victories made international headlines.⁸⁶ Over time, the southern movement came to be celebrated across the political spectrum as proof of American exceptionalism.⁸⁷ The North complicates that story—and thus the added investment in holding up the openness of the liberal North and marginalizing those who pointed out otherwise.

Fitting with this Cold War paradigm, news organizations propped up the myth of northern racism as aberrant and accidental while intrepid journalists journeyed south to cover the movement and racism there, demonstrating the power of American democracy at work. Critics of northern, liberal institutions and practices were dismissed as reckless, extreme, unjustified, or Communist sympathizers.⁸⁸ Given these Cold War realities, culture became the chief analytical lens through which to

talk about race, and ethnographers journeyed to ghettos from Chicago to Delhi to capture and expose these “cultural traditions,” and “deprivations”⁸⁹ that trapped people in poverty. U.S. Cold War interests painted people of color at home and abroad as possessing cultural values and practices at odds with the successful modern life and in need of cultural remediation. Thus, part of the work these essays do is consider the investments, both historical and contemporary, in casting the black freedom struggle and American racism in certain ways.

Unveiling the Jim Crow North: What These Chapters Do

Analyzing the paradoxes and contradictions that veiled northern Jim Crow, especially those around arguments that reduce racial inequality to inherent cultural differences, these chapters chart the arduous, frustrating struggles black citizens waged against the Jim Crow North, and the historical memories surrounding it. These essays span a variety of locales—big cities like New York City, Los Angeles, Detroit, and San Francisco, and smaller industrial ones like Milwaukee and Rochester. They bring black freedom fighters well known in their time back to the fore: Say Burgin looks at Smith Act lawyer and Recorder Court judge George Crockett, while John Portlock examines the work of newspaper editor and candidate for the U.S. vice presidency Charlotta Bass. Other essays turn their attention on northern whites. Mary Barr examines the white people who sought to unveil the Jim Crow North, like the 1965 North Shore Summer Project, and their neighbors who refused. Laura Warren Hill zeroes in on the white people who defended their entitlements and racial prerogatives through a “Jim Crow discourse” that united North and South, like those who wrote Rochester’s mayor after the 1964 uprising.

These essays unveil the racial underbellies of liberal institutions like the *New York Times* and the City University of New York, as Tahir Butt shows in the struggles around free tuition at CUNY in the 1960s. Others open up discussion of the Jim Crow North in American memory, literature, and film; essays by Balthazar Beckett and Ayesha Hardison demonstrate how much more there is to see about classic texts like *Brown Girl Brownstones* and *Raisin in the Sun* and independent films like *Night Catches Us* by examining how they center a critique of northern lib-

eral racism. The chapters show how challenges to the Jim Crow North were sometimes embedded in global anticolonial struggles, and that the critique of northern racism often necessitated a challenge to Cold War liberalism, which brought down the full weight of American anticommunism and red-baiting tactics onto the heads of northern antiracist activists.

Moving chronologically, these essays are set in familiar places, such as courtrooms, schools, municipal offices, and metropolitan streets, where citizens in northern and western cities encountered racial segregation and discrimination in ways that were mundane, institutional, and structural. As Shannon King, Say Burgin, and Peter Levy demonstrate, they reveal the role of the law and law enforcement—and the collusion of police, prosecutors, judges, politicians, and the media—in maintaining this system of injustice. They show how northern black intellectuals like Ella Baker and Mae Mallory, as Kristopher Burrell outlines, theorized that system and fought against Jim Crow in New York City, and the ways in which black activists in Milwaukee came up with creative ways to use religious networks to press for hiring nondiscrimination, as Crystal Moten does in her chapter.

Fewer vigilantes populate these essays because many northerners preferred the civility of entrusting the task of racial management and control to police on the beat, and judges on the bench. Picking up gaps in the first generation of scholarship on the northern struggle, Aliyah Dunn Salahuddin looks at the role and context of the uprisings of the mid-1960s and the long history of organizing and grievances that preceded the 1966 uprising in the Bay View–Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. Levy focuses on the coverage of SNCC chair H. Rap Brown and how the media laid the ideological groundwork for “law-and-order politics” that furthered imprisoning black people and criminalizing radical black activism. Several of these pieces—Peter Levy’s and Shannon King’s explicitly—demonstrate that the media was not so noble when it came to struggles in the North and the West.

The work in this volume is both a product of fifteen years of scholarship on the North and a response to certain gaps in that scholarship. Several themes about the history of the Jim Crow North emerge in these essays. The first is a critique of language, practices, and ideologies of northern liberalism and an attention to the ways black activists, art-

ists, and intellectuals developed theories about the limits of the North as “promised land.” Color-blind liberalism allowed northern Jim Crow to hide in plain sight. To do this, as these pieces detail, a lexicon of the Jim Crow North developed: “de facto segregation,” “racial imbalance,” “separation,” “cultural deprivation,” “underprivileged,” “neighborhood schools,” “busing,” “crime,” “juvenile delinquency,” “law and order”—all were framings developed to assuage and explain northern segregation in the era of *Brown*. Part of the challenge that black citizens encountered—as many of these chapters demonstrate—was how to make the Jim Crow North visible, and hold officials accountable amid these slippery ideological framings.

With years of protests and petitions falling on deaf ears, or producing token changes, as a number of essays show, the “Great Uprisings” of the mid-to-late 1960s occurred.⁹⁰ Blacks in the North and West no longer waited for change to happen through “acceptable” means of political process. As these essays argue, after years of frustrated struggle had produced little change and much silence from the very liberals decrying southern racism, the uprisings of the mid-to-late 1960s disrupted and unmasked the oft-ignored and overlooked systematic nature of the Jim Crow North. They revealed the injustices of violence in the North—violence that was “legalized” because it came from the police and from the structures that ghettoized black people into decrepit housing and underserved neighborhoods, with little access to decent jobs or health care. And so a second strategic intervention the volume makes is to more explicitly intertwine the northern black freedom movement with the uprisings of the 1960s: the latter occurred because, for decades, northerners ignored, or paid lip service to, the former.⁹¹

Third is a critique of culture-of-poverty framings of northern black life that rendered northern black people as alienated and different from southern black people, and of the assumption that they did not produce the kinds of movements southerners did. The North experienced a long activist, intellectual movement, and witnessed decades of citizens’ use of “proper channels” to express grievances with school segregation, housing segregation, job exclusion, and police brutality—whose push for reform largely fell on deaf ears before the uprisings in many cities. While Bill Cosby’s 2004 poundcake speech alleged that black behaviors and cultures were now what held the black community back and Presi-

dent Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative similarly proffered cultural solutions, these essays remind us of the extended and foul history of "cultural" explanations to deflect calls for desegregation—and how long black community activists have been fighting such explanations.

The essays in this volume also force us to reexamine the role of the media and civil rights. Built through books like the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Race Beat*, there is an assumption that the media was a champion of movement.⁹² But the national media, based largely in the North, covered northern inequality and struggle in its own backyard very differently from its intrepid coverage, by the early 1960s, of the Jim Crow South. At home, it dismissed black protest, treating it as episodic, deviant, and violent (even when no destruction of people or property occurred). It overlooked and undercovered racism outside of the South and replicated the frame of surprise over the uprisings of the mid-1960s, forgetting the years of black protest and helping to further a law-and-order politics.

The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North helps us to reconsider and reject the idea of northern racism as episodic and transplanted, rather than state-sponsored and indigenous. It forces us to question the idea of urban disorders and uprisings as products of culture, not reflections of political resistance and outgrowths of longstanding struggle met with fierce white resistance. These essays demonstrate the ways in which the Jim Crow North proved much harder to unveil and destroy and how hard people would fight to preserve these racially inequitable systems, all the while taking umbrage at being called racist. They disrupt culture and behavior as explanatory, analytical frameworks for black urban problems associated with poverty, crime, and educational disparities—that too often framed northern blacks as angry, alienated, and unable to build movements like their southern counterparts. And they insist on examining the variety of ways black people wrote, organized, and agitated to reveal this Jim Crow system. Taken together, these chapters show how misapprehensions of northern virtue and innocence have worked to obfuscate the structural violence and racial inequality that continues to assail black communities today.

The essays in this anthology argue that it is impossible to avoid the Jim Crow North as a central concept for understanding the United States in the twenty-first century. The history of its strange careers and the

black freedom movements that challenged it deserve more attention, especially if we, as a nation, want to have any hope of addressing their manifestations in contemporary political, economic, social, and cultural life. These northern stories provide a missing link that can ground current analyses of American racism within broader, deeper histories of American racial inequality. This history helps us to make sense of the recent findings that the most segregated school systems are largely outside the South,⁹³ that the most segregated cities are largely outside the South,⁹⁴ that most of the police killings that have galvanized a growing Black Lives Matter movement have taken place outside the South. Tracing the history of the long black freedom struggle in the Jim Crow North provides important historical antecedents of #BlackLivesMatter and where we must go today.

The sooner Americans recognize this aspect of our history, the sooner we can devise real solutions for real historical and contemporary social problems connected to racism. With Donald Trump—whose racist discourses and practices were homegrown in the Jim Crow North⁹⁵— as president, understanding this history has become even more urgent. The United States in 2018 is paying dearly for failing to recognize this history of northern segregation and struggle. The ideologies, bureaucratic structures, and practices of the Jim Crow North are still with us today. The black activism documented in these essays provides lessons on how we can imagine a different society and chart an alternative, just future.

NOTES

- 1 Martin Luther King Jr., “Beyond the Los Angeles Riots: Next Step, the North,” *Saturday Review* (November 13, 1965), 33–35, 105.
- 2 C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 99–100.
- 3 Neil R. McMillan, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 41.
- 4 Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage, 1998), passim, 236; *Garner v. Louisiana*, 368 U.S. 157 (1961), 181.
- 5 *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 280–325.
- 6 Examples of popular narrative histories include David Halberstam, *The Children* (New York: Random House, 1998); Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–1963* (New York: Random House, 1988); Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement in the Deep South* (New York: Putnam, 1977); Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v.*

Board of Education and *Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Knopf, 1976); Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), chapters 30–31. Perhaps even more powerfully, documentaries like *Eyes on the Prize* (1987–1990), and feature films like *Selma* (2014), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *The Help* (2011), and *The Butler* (2013) have engraved this idea of southern exceptionalism into common sense.

- 7 Overviews of this field include Brian Purnell, “Freedom North Studies, the Long Civil Rights Movement, and Twentieth-Century Liberalism in American Cities,” *Journal of Urban History*, 42:3, 634–40; Patrick Jones, ed., “Beyond Dixie: The Black Freedom Struggle outside of the South,” special issue, *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, 26:1 (January 2012). An early example of civil rights movement history that paid equal attention to the North, South, and West was August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). A key essay that called for civil rights movement historians to broaden their geographic scope is Steven Lawson, “Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement,” *American Historical Review*, 96:2 (April 1991), 456–71. Later historians who focused specifically on the North include James Ralph, *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Thomas J. Sugrue, “Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940–1964,” *Journal of American History*, 82:2 (September 1995), 551–78; Arnold R. Hirsch, “Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953–1966,” *Journal of American History*, 82:2 (September 1995), 522–50; Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Fight for School Integration in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), and Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). This scholarship of activism against racial discrimination in the North grew, in part, from a historiography that examined the Old Left, especially in northern black communities. See, for example, Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Great Depression* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1983).
- 8 On how histories of racism and racial segregation influence contemporary American life see Michael B. Katz, Mark J. Stern, and Jamie J. Fader, “The New African American Inequality,” *Journal of American History*, 92:1 (June 2005), 75–108. On how histories of the black freedom movement overlook the North, see Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (eds.), *Freedom North*; and Jeanne Theoharis, A

More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History (Boston: Beacon, 2018).

- 9 One of the first studies to address these questions was Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). See more recent scholarship by Richard Archer, *Jim Crow North: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Antebellum New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Norton, 2015); Stephen Kantrowitz, *More Than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829–1889* (New York: Penguin, 2012); Desmond S. King and Stephen G. N. Tuck, “De-centering the South: America’s Nationwide White Supremacist Order after Reconstruction,” *Past and Present*, 194 (February 2007), 213–54. Patrick Rael’s scholarship is indispensable; see Patrick Rael, *Black Protest and Black Identity in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); *African American Activism before the Civil War: The Freedom Struggle in the Antebellum North* (New York: Routledge, 2008); *Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery, 1777–1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015); as is David Gellman and David Quigley, *Jim Crow New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship* (New York: NYU Press, 2003). An exciting examination of early histories of race, racism, black, white, and indigenous people is Tiya Miles, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of Straits* (New York: New Press, 2018).
- 10 For a synthesis of this history, see Tom Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008). On housing, see Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Norton, 2017); Destin Jenkins, “Who Segregated America,” *Public Books*, Dec. 21, 2017, <http://www.publicbooks.org>; Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan, 2009); Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *Atlantic* (June 2014), 54–71; “America’s Federally Financed Ghettos,” *New York Times*, editorial (April 7, 2018) “Blacks Still Face a Red Line on Housing,” *New York Times*, editorial (April 14, 2018) and N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of the Jim Crow South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). On employment, see Katz et al., “The New African American Inequality,” 85–92, 95–108; William Sites and Virginia Parks, “What Do We Really Know about Racial Inequality? Labor Market, Politics, and the Historical Basis of Black Economic Fortunes,” *Politics and Society*, 39:1, 40–73. On education, see Katz et al., “The New African American Inequality,” 92–95; Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City,” *New York Times Magazine* (June 9, 2016.) On the carceral state, see Heather Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *Journal of American History*, 97:3 (December 2010), 703–34; James Foreman Jr., *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2017); Michelle

- Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012); and Devah Pager, *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- 11 King and Tuck, “De-centering the South,” 215. Histories of the great migration include James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Nicolas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Knopf, 1991); James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migration of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2011).
 - 12 Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1981), 254. Harding had borrowed his image from Henry Highland Garnet, who once warned, “[T]he Pharaohs are on both sides of the blood-red waters.” See Henry Highland Garnet, *An Address to the Slaves of the United States*, 1843. Available at <http://www.blackpast.org>.
 - 13 David Brinkley, *Rosa Parks: A Life* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 67.
 - 14 See Malcolm X interviewed by Professor John Leggett and Herman Blake (graduate student) (Dept. of Sociology) at the University of California–Berkeley, October 11, 1963 (0:19:43–0:25:07), available for viewing at www.lib.berkeley.edu.
 - 15 On the history of black elected officials in Detroit, see Roosevelt Ruffin, *Black Presence in Saginaw* (Saginaw, MI: Roosevelt Ruffin, 1978) for information on William Q. Atwood, an influential late-nineteenth-century lumber businessman and political organizer. See also information on the life of Samuel C. Watson (1832–1892), who served on the Detroit City Council, 1883–1886. On Chicago’s black congressman, who served from 1929 to 1935, see Elliott M. Rudwick, “Oscar De Priest and the Jim Crow Restaurant in the U.S. House of Representatives,” *Journal of Negro Education*, 35 (Winter 1966): 77–82. On the New Deal, see the thirtieth anniversary edition of Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue; The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). On the “raw deal” aspects of the New Deal, see Joe William Trotter Jr., “From a Raw Deal to a New Deal, 1929–1945,” in Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis (eds.), *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 409–44; Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Norton, 2005); and “New Deal, Raw Deal,” *Washington Post* (September 27, 2005); Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Norton, 2017); and Charles Lane, “The New Deal as Raw Deal for Blacks in Segregated Communities,” *Washington Post* (May 25, 2017).
 - 16 *Baker v Carr* (1962) was a landmark case for black urban voting, giving federal courts the ability to intervene in redistricting to address urban

underapportionment—Earl Warren would call it the most important in his tenure as chief justice. But it gathers barely a mention in the popular story of the struggle for voting rights. See “More Perfect” podcast (June 10, 2016) at <https://www.wnycstudios.org>.

- 17 Brian Purnell, “Confederate Flags in the Jim Crow North,” *Black Perspectives* (July 1, 2015). Available at <https://www.aaihs.org>.
- 18 See Patrick Jones, *The Selma of the North: The Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, on similar confrontations in Detroit and Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), for Chicago.
- 19 Andrew Kahl, *Free the Beaches: The Story of Ned Coll and the Battle for America’s Most Exclusive Shoreline* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).
- 20 Ian Haney Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16.
- 21 Dan Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 365–66.
- 22 An excellent, thorough overview of the diversity of southern responses to calls to end Jim Crow in the South is Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945–1975* (New York: Knopf, 2006). On southerners who opposed racial segregation and discrimination, see Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: Norton, 2006).
- 23 See Matthew Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 24 E. Franklin Frazier, Gunnar Myrdal, and Oscar Lewis were early proponents of such cultural explanations.
- 25 Scholars have produced multiple studies on the Black Freedom Movement outside the South. See Theoharis and Woodard (eds.), *Freedom North*, and *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: NYU Press, 2005); James Ralph, *Northern Protest*; Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Brian Purnell, *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: The Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Josh Sides, *LA City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and*

- Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Yohuru Williams, *Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Black Panthers in New Haven* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggles in St. Louis, 1936–1975* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Joan Singler, Jean Durning, Bettylou Valentine, and Maid Adams, *Seattle in Black and White: The Congress of Racial Equality and the Fight for Equal Opportunity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); Jacobi Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women’s Struggle against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar’s Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon, 2005); Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 2007); Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Matthew F. Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); and Mark Speltz, *North of Dixie: Civil Rights Photography beyond the South* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2016).
- 26 Textbooks like Alan Brinkley’s *Unfinished Nation* have not substantially incorporated these two decades of scholarship on the North into the way they tell the story of race in the twentieth century. Here we also refer to important public history syntheses like Henry Louis Gates’s PBS series *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* and *Black America: And Still I Rise*, the section on post-WWII black life and the civil rights movement at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Equal Justice Initiative’s Legacy Museum and “Segregation in America” report (2018) found at <https://segregationinamerica.eji.org>.
- 27 This phrase comes from the 1992 edition of George B. Tindall and David E. Shi, *American History: A Narrative History* (New York: Norton, 1992), 469–70. See Thomas C. Holt, “Reconstruction in United States History Textbooks,” *Journal of American History*, 81:4 (March 1995), 1641–51, esp. 1650.
- 28 Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 6.
- 29 See Rev. Prince Hall et al., “1787 Petition for Equal Education Facilities,” in Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor (eds.), *Civil Rights since 1787: A Reader on the*

- Black Struggle* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 35. See also, Tony Hill, "Class and Inequality, Ethnicity and Education: The Politics of Black Education, 1780–1980," *Boston Review* (Oct. 1981), available at <http://bostonreview.net>.
- 30 Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 113–52, esp. 147–49.
- 31 Matthew Delmont and Jeanne Theoharis (eds.), special issue, "Rethinking the Boston 'Busing Crisis,'" *Journal of Urban History* (March 2017). See also, Lily Geismer, *Don't Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 71–96; 199–226.
- 32 In 1956, in an effort to defend their "massive resistance" to the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, which overturned *Plessy*, southern members of the House of Representatives issued what they called the "Southern Manifesto." These pro-segregationists reminded their liberal colleagues, and the nation, that the type of Jim Crow they wanted to protect had its origins in the North. "This constitutional doctrine" of separate but equal "began in the North—not in the South," the Southern Manifesto stated, "and it was followed not only in Massachusetts, but in Connecticut, New York, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and other northern states until they, exercising their rights as states through the constitutional processes of local self-government, changed their school systems." See John Kyle Day, *The Southern Manifesto: Massive Resistance and the Fight to Preserve Segregation* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014).
- 33 On New York, see Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*.
- 34 On restrictions against black settlement in other northern states, see Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*.
- 35 Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*, passim; Tocqueville quoted on 65.
- 36 Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, "The Etymology of Nigger: Resistance, Language, and the Politics of Freedom in the Antebellum North," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 36:2 (Summer 2016), 203–45, esp., 210–11, 213–14, 216–18, 224–25.
- 37 Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- 38 Hugh Davis, "We Will Be Satisfied with Nothing Less": *The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).
- 39 Michael J. Pfeifer, "The Northern United States and the Genesis of Racial Lynching: The Lynching of African Americans in the Civil War Era," *Journal of American History* (Dec. 2010), 621–35, quoted from 623–24. See also, Pfeifer (ed.), *Lynching beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence outside the South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice: The Origins of Lynching in the U.S.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

- 40 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 460–71, quotation on 471.
- 41 The National Labor Congress wanted either to create racially segregated locals for blacks and whites or to drop the issue.
- 42 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*, 479, 496, 498, 499.
- 43 James Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).
- 44 See Start Making Sense podcast of *The Nation* with Linda Gordon, “Fred Trump and the Making of the Ku Klux Klan” (January 4, 2018) at <https://www.thenation.com>; Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Norton, 2017).
- 45 Joshua Rothman, “When Bigotry Paraded through the Streets,” *Atlantic*, December 4, 2016. See also, Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*.
- 46 Mike Pearl, “All the Evidence We Could Find about Fred Trump’s Alleged Involvement with the KKK,” *Vice* (March 10, 2016); Adam Hothschild, “Ku Klux Klambakes,” *New York Review of Books* (December 7, 2017).
- 47 According to Oxford University Press, the book sold nearly a million copies (<https://global.oup.com>).
- 48 C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), preface, ix.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 18–21, esp. 19.
- 52 *Ibid.*, *passim*.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 21.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 70.
- 55 Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Sean Farhang and Ira Katznelson, “The Southern Imposition: Congress and Labor in the New Deal and Fair Deal,” *Studies in American Political Development*, 19 (Spring 2005), 1–30; Ira Katznelson and Quinn Mulroy, “Was the South Pivotal? Situated Partisanship and Policy Coalitions during the New Deal and Fair Deal,” *Journal of Politics*, 74:2 (March 2012), 604–20; for a fascinating debate on whether or not the GI Bill exacerbated racial inequality or reduced it, see Ira Katznelson and Suzanne Mettler, “On Race and Policy History: A Dialogue about the G.I. Bill,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 6:3 (September 2008), 519–37; Ira Katznelson, Kim Geiger, and Daniel Kryder, “Limiting Liberalism: The Southern Veto in Congress, 1933–1950,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 108:2 (Summer 1993), 283–306.
- 58 Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Times* (New York: Norton, 2013), 21.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 22.

- 60 Ira Katznelson, “New Deal, Raw Deal.” Other noteworthy scholarship that advances this argument includes Anthony S. Chen, *The Fifth Freedom: Jobs, Politics, and Civil Rights in the United States, 1941–1972* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); and Eric Schickler, *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).
- 61 Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins of Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 6.
- 62 Anthony Chen, “The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North, 1945–1964,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 112:6 (May 2007), 1713–74.
- 63 Craig Wilder, *A Covenant with Color* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* New York: Oxford University Press, 1987; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.
- 64 Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.
- 65 Jason Sokol, *All Eyes Are upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), xi.
- 66 When black activists first took their case of Boston’s segregated schools to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, MCAD pronounced them “not segregated.” That was how the Jim Crow North worked; at times the very bodies convened to monitor discrimination became barriers. Ruth Batson, A Chronology of the Educational Movement in Boston, manuscript in Ruth Batson’s papers, 2001-M194, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute.
- 67 Martin Luther King Jr., “Beyond the Los Angeles Riots.”
- 68 See Jones’s *Selma of the North*; Frazier’s *Harambee City: The Congress of Racial Equality in Cleveland and the Rise of Black Power Populism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2017); and Theoharis’s *More Beautiful and Terrible History* for fuller descriptions of these events.
- 69 Sokol, *All Eyes*.
- 70 Karen Miller, *Managing Inequality: Northern Racial Liberalism in Interwar Detroit* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
- 71 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 72 Khalil Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 7, 226.
- 73 “A Boycott Solves Nothing,” editorial, *New York Times* (January 31, 1964) “No More School Boycotts,” editorial, *New York Times* (February 3, 1964).
- 74 “Poll Shows Whites in City Resent Civil Rights Drive,” *New York Times*, September 21, 1964.
- 75 See chapter 1 of Matthew Delmont’s *Why Busing Failed*.
- 76 “Racial imbalance” became the preferred northern euphemism for northern segregation—and even more curiously, all-white or nearly all-white schools, per Massachusetts law, were not considered “racially imbalanced.” Matthew Delmont, “The Origins of Anti-Busing Politics,” *Gotham* blog, found at: www.gothamcenter.org.

- 77 As cited by Matthew Delmont, *Why Busing Failed*, 50.
- 78 Matthew Delmont, “When Black Voters Exited Left,” *Atlantic* (March 31, 2016).
- 79 Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010); Ta Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *Atlantic* (June 2014); Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City,” *New York Times Magazine* (June 9, 2016); Nikole Hannah-Jones, “The Continuing Reality of Segregated Schools” *New York Times* (July 31, 2015); Nikole Hannah-Jones “School Segregation, the Continuing Tragedy of Ferguson,” *Pro Publica* (December 19, 2014).
- 80 Kathryn Bigelow’s feature film *Detroit* and much of the commentary surrounding it was a particularly egregious example of the erasure of black perspectives. See Jeanne Theoharis, Say Burgin, and Mary Phillips, “*Detroit* Is the Most Irresponsible and Dangerous Movie of the Year,” *Huffington Post* (September 8, 2017).
- 81 Equal Justice Initiative, “Segregation in America” (2018). For a contemporary report that centers the history of northern Jim Crow, see the Brennan Center, “Jim Crow in New York” (2009) at <https://www.brennancenter.org>.
- 82 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010), 4.
- 83 Recent work by Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), and Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Drugs: The Making of Mass Incarceration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016) has moved our understandings of the rise of mass incarceration and criminalization as a hallmark of the new Right’s ascendancy in American politics to seeing its earlier liberal roots.
- 84 Loïc Wacquant, “From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Rethinking the Race Question in the U.S.,” *New Left Review*, 13 (Jan.–Feb. 2002), 41–60; Craig Wilder, *A Covenant with Color* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Khalil Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*.
- 85 Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 18–19.
- 86 Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- 87 See the preface and chapter 1 of *A More Beautiful and Terrible History* for further exposition of contemporary uses of civil rights history to further narratives of American exceptionalism.
- 88 The *New York Times* covered desegregation struggles in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1962 and 1963 in strikingly different ways to the way it covered school desegregation struggles in New York City at this time.
- 89 Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- 90 Peter Levy, *The Great Uprising* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- 91 Early works on the black freedom struggle outside the South—like Theoharis and Woodard’s *Freedom North* and *Groundwork*—sought to expand the conversa-

tion on what aspects of black life and struggle in the North were even seen and understood—and gave limited attention to northern uprisings, given how much attention had focused on them in the preceding decades and in textbooks.

- 92 Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of the Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006).
- 93 “UCLA Report Finds Changing US Demographics Transform School Segregation Landscape 60 Years after Brown,” press release (May 15, 2014). Downloaded from www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu.
- 94 “Top Ten Most Segregated Cities in the US,” *Atlanta Black Star* (March 24, 2014.)
- 95 Fred C. Trump, Donald Trump’s father, built his racially discriminatory housing empire and wealth largely through public subsidy. He ran afoul of the government in the 1950s for profiteering off public contracts, admitting he had dramatically overinflated costs to get larger FHA mortgages. The New York Commission for Human Rights investigated the Trump Organization for racial discrimination in the 1960s and 1970s, finding Trump Village in South Brooklyn had only seven black families out of thirty-seven hundred units. In 1973, the U.S. Justice Department sued Trump Management for housing discrimination, naming both Fred and Donald as defendants. The Trumps countersued, with Donald claiming that the government was trying to force him to rent to “welfare recipients.” Records released suggest evidence of black applicants being steered away and applications being tossed in drawers or marked with “No. 9” or “C” for colored. The suit ended in a 1975 consent decree with new antidiscriminatory practices in place (the government claimed in 1978 that the Trump Organization had violated the consent decree but no action resulted). In May 1989, before the criminal trials had concluded, and in ways reminiscent of post-Reconstruction-era newspaper calls for lynchings of black men accused, but not convicted, of crimes, Donald Trump took out ads in four New York newspapers calling for reinstating the death penalty for the “Central Park 5.” He told TV interviewer Larry King, “[M]aybe hate is what we need if we’re going to get something done.” Peter Dreier, “Trump’s Housing Hypocrisy,” *Prospect* (April 7, 2017); Michael Kranish and Robert O’Harrow, “Inside the Government’s Racial Bias Case against Donald Trump and How He Fought It,” *Washington Post* (January 23, 2016).