

Tell the Truth

... About the History of the United States and its
Black People

Week 2: February 5 - 11, 2018

January 27th
Today was not a good learning day.
blab blab blab I only wanted to hear you not
talking. You said something wrong and I can't
listen when I hear lies. My mom said that the
only Christopher we acknowledge is Wallace.
Because Columbus didn't find our country the
Indians did. I like to have Columbus day
off but I want you to not teach his
lies. That is all. My question for this
day is how can white people ~~teach~~ teach
black history? King Johnson

King I am very disappointed in
your Journal today.
ok

Articles Compiled and Arranged by Rann Miller
Original Content Written and Developed by Rann
Miller

Disclaimers

This text is a compilation of history articles related to Black people in the United States found from various online sources. These sources primarily comprise of traditional news outlets i.e. Washington Post, NPR and New York Times; also non-traditional online-based journalist reporting outlets i.e. Vox, Alternet, Huffington Post and Slate. These articles, and the information found in them, are not the original content of Rann Miller. All articles included in this text compiled from online sources will include the name of the original author and the online address for where the original article can be found. These various articles are not for resale.

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This text is not for resale. While original content is included within this document, this document is of no cost and is available for public consumption. The purpose of this text is to provide educators with a text to teach and instruct students. Also, this text is for any lifelong learner who desires to increase in their knowledge of truth about the history of the United States and the Black people who have contributed greatly to it.

- Rann Miller

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Introduction

Growing Up, Black History Month was a major part of my cultural curriculum. At the conclusion of my elementary education, stories and lessons on Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King were apart of my cultural, and academic, lexicon. However, as I got older, I realized there was much more information to build my knowledge upon.

As a middle and high school social studies teacher, I took pride in sharing the same lessons imparted to me to, my students during Black History Month. I taught Black history all academic year. During Black History Month, I taught the more concealed aspects of Black history. The history of Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King are a part of American history and in the context of the way we teach American history, educators should include these people and events in the curriculum. Some would argue that educators do; I do not believe that to be the case.

Eight-year-old King Johnson wrote in his journal that he did not want his teacher to teach him lies. He specifically was referring to the lies taught to him about Christopher Columbus “finding” the New World. I believe that King Johnson’s sentiment is indicative of all students, particularly students of color — students who, historically, have had the truth of their history withheld from them. They are tired of teachers lying to them. This text compilation of articles is to serve as a teaching resource for teachers to teach the unadulterated truth of American history to their students during the month of February, and throughout the year. The articles offered in this document can be used to create lessons and projects for students to increase in their knowledge of American history. Whether in high school or kindergarten, teach all students the history and not HISTory. TELL THE TRUTH!!!!

- Rann Miller

Bloom's Taxonomy Framework

This rubric is designed to provide educators with a framework to provide tiered questions to track student understanding. This rubric is based on the Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking. These questions are simply a guide to develop your own questions – they are not specific for each article. This is only to serve as a guide. You are welcome to develop your own questions for each article. For more information on Bloom's Taxonomy, please visit <https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/blooms-taxonomy-learning-objectives-and-higher-order-thinking/>

	Happening / Event	Famous Person(s)	Black Tradition	Popular Culture
Level 1 - Remembering	What are the major facts presented in this article: (1) who are the individuals involved, (2) what are the details of what took place according to the article, what is the setting, what is the date and why did it happen (what were the reasons it happened)?			
Level 2 - Understanding	Explain the main idea and the major details of the article in your own words. Please include 2 to 4 major details in your paraphrased explanation.			
Level 3 - Applying	Think about the details of the article and tell what you would do if you were living at the time facing similar circumstances.	Think about the details of the article and tell how your life would be similar or different if presented with similar circumstances as this person.	Think about the details of the article and demonstrate how you would apply this tradition with your family, friends or peers.	Think about the details of the article and interpret the meaning of this happening in popular culture.
Level 4 -Analyzing	Why do you think what happened was able to happen? Could a similar thing happen today?	What are the similarities and difference between this individual and a similar famous figure; past or present.	What criticisms do you have of this particular tradition? How to reconcile your criticism with someone who holds this tradition in high esteem?	Distinguish the meaning of the contents of the article between its impact on many people versus its impact on an individual person.
Level 5 - Evaluating	Appraise the value of this moment in culture. Evaluate the impact and results of what happened.	Defend the actions or decisions of this individual someone may consider to be risky, harmful or controversial.	Defend this tradition to someone looking to remove it from social and/or cultural significance.	Select an antithesis moment/trend to counter this moment in popular culture.
Level 6 - Creating	Develop a hallmark card that celebrates this event yearly.	Write a letter to this famous person explaining what you think of their life and the decisions they've made.	Either create new details to add to this tradition to make it better or create a brand new tradition to replace the tradition in this article.	Design an advertisement to promote this particular cultural moment to expose its impact on society.

Part One

Online Articles Of History

This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico

By **Reynaldo Leanos Jr.**, www.pri.org

March 29th, 2017

Donald Trump said during the presidential campaign that he wanted to keep “bad hombres” out of the country. He told the Mexican president, according to documents obtained by the Associated Press, that he wanted Mexico to stop “bad hombres down there” from coming across the southern border of the US.

The government has also started receiving applications from companies across the country to continue construction of a southern border wall.

But going north across the border has not always been the objective. More than 100 years ago, for example, Americans were escaping into Mexico.

Slaves in the US famously took the underground railroad north into free states and Canada, but a similar path existed to the south into Mexico. Slavery was abolished in Mexico in 1829 by Mexican President Vicente Guerrero, who was of mixed descent, including African heritage.

That's why, on a cloudy day this winter, Roseann Bacha-Garza is walking through tall grass and trying not to step on tombstones that date back to the mid 1800s at the Jackson Ranch cemetery in San Juan, Texas. She manages the Community Historical Archeology Projects with Schools program at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She says the Jackson family in south Texas played an instrumental role in smuggling slaves into Mexico.

Bacha-Garza says, through her research, she has reason to believe the Jackson family became known for offering slaves refuge, a safe-haven on their paths to freedom.

Bacha-Garza says much of her research comes from oral histories of descendants of families who originally settled on the border during this time period, and through historical documents. She believes, because Jackson Ranch was so close to the Rio Grande, they would help smuggle slaves into Mexico. The Jacksons were religious people trying to do the right thing and did not believe in the Confederate cause.

Nathaniel Jackson was the son of a plantation owner in Alabama. He and his family owned slaves, but eventually emancipated them. He married Matilda Hicks, who was once a slave on his family's plantation, and headed to the Rio Grande Valley with their children and five other families in covered wagons in 1857.

“They probably felt this would be a nice place to come and re-establish themselves far away from the long-arm of the law, where they're from in Alabama,” says Bacha-Garza. “This place was a place where people worked side-by-side and I think it seemed like a place that was known where you could come and have a new beginning.”

She says some communities along the border in the US, historically, were empathetic to helping slaves because of events that took place in the past. Bacha-Garza says people who owned land north of the Rio Grande, before the end of the Mexican-American War were Mexican citizens. After the war the region became part of the US. That's when they had to learn new government rules and often were cheated out of their lands.

Before that, Native American tribes thrived in the region; they lost their land when the Spaniards came and claimed it as their own.

“You have a region where people are feeling they were living here all copacetic and nobody was bothering them, but all of a sudden somebody came in and took everything away,” says Bacha Garza. “They were sympathetic to the slaves because they were feeling their pain, they were being mistreated and that’s not fair.”

The Jacksons became subsistence farmers who ranched cattle, planted crops and traded their surplus with people in Mexico. Bacha-Garza says there were many ferries set up in the 1850s, so people could easily trade across the Rio Grande. This also served as a potential opportunity for slaves to cross into Mexico, or border families to assist in the smuggling of slaves.

However, not everything was entirely peaceful on the border. Military forts were also present along the river, remnants of the Mexican-American War of the 1840s. Bacha-Garza says officials at these forts were instructed to capture and return any slaves to their owners. But the structures were far from each other.

“When you have that many miles between posts, it’s really hard to manage every inch of the border. Kind of like what we have going on today,” says Bacha-Garza. “People are crossing into the country and the Border Patrol, even though they’re on horseback, they’re on SUVs, they’re on foot — they just can’t handle it.”

Bacha-Garza says her research indicates that about 3,000 slaves escaped across the river in the 1850s.

Maria Hammack is a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Texas at Austin. She’s currently researching what life was like after for runaway slaves who escaped into Mexico.

Hammack says the people she's been able to trace, through her research and obtaining historical documents, show slaves were helped in many ways by border officials.

"One of the border officials in Monclova had the town pitch in some money for a family who had arrived without money and food, so the town actually provided them with clothing, food and money," says Hammack. "They gave it to them so they can continue traveling south."

They wanted to get them as far south as possible because they feared slave catchers, from the US, would cross into Mexico and try to retrieve them.

"The organization that we know today as the Texas Rangers was born out of an organization of men that were slave hunters," says Hammack. "They were bounty hunters trying to retrieve enslaved property that crossed the Rio Grande for slave owners and would get paid according to how far into Mexico the slaves were found."

Slave hunters were crossing illegally into Mexico and had no jurisdiction in the country. Hammack says she's found documents that indicate slave owners in the US were upset with Mexico because they wouldn't cooperate in returning them. She says she needs to do more research to figure out if it was a one time thing, or if it was pretty frequent.

Both Hammack and Bacha-Garza say there's still a lot to uncover about this hidden history.

"I'm constantly doing research, as are other members of this [Jackson] family. Sometimes you can see them on blogs on the internet," says Bacha-Garza.

Lupe Flores, 27, is one of those family members. He's a descendant of both the Jacksons and the Webbers, another family that settled in the Rio Grande Valley and arrived earlier than the Jacksons.

Flores is a graduate student of anthropology and Mexican American studies at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He says he grew up hearing stories about his family's historical past, but it wasn't until later that he fully understood the significance of his ancestral roots.

"I was in undergrad when I began systematically researching my grandmother, her family history here in Hidalgo County," says Flores.

His family history is often the inspiration for his academic writing. For example, he writes about "permutations of resistance" on the border.

"Through different times in the history and in the past, there's been people resisting the policies of the state, the borders of the state," says Flores. "Back then, it was helping slaves cross into Mexico. And in the 1900s this area was also a place of cross border movement during prohibition."

Flores says the border is now much more militarized than it was, but resistance still occurs, usually in the form of residents helping undocumented people into the country. And he doesn't see it stopping anytime soon.

"Even with walls being built, there's still always going to be a way to subvert the state and its machinations to control the border," says Flores.

The Truth Behind '40 Acres and a Mule'

By Henry Louis Gates, www.pbs.org

February 13th, 2017

We've all heard the story of the "40 acres and a mule" promise to former slaves. It's a staple of black history lessons, and it's the name of Spike Lee's film company. The promise was the first systematic attempt to provide a form of reparations to newly freed slaves, and it was astonishingly radical for its time, proto-socialist in its implications. In fact, such a policy would be radical in any country today: the federal government's massive confiscation of private property — some 400,000 acres — formerly owned by Confederate land owners, and its methodical redistribution to former black slaves. What most of us haven't heard is that the idea really was generated by black leaders themselves.

It is difficult to stress adequately how *revolutionary* this idea was: As the historian Eric Foner puts it in his book, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, "Here in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, the prospect beckoned of a transformation of Southern society more radical even than the end of slavery." Try to imagine how profoundly different the history of race relations in the United States would have been had this policy been implemented and enforced; had the former slaves actually had access to the ownership of land, of property; if they had had a chance to be self-sufficient economically, to build, accrue and pass on *wealth*. After all, one of the principal promises of America was the possibility of average people being able to own *land*, and all that such ownership entailed. As we know all too well, this promise was not to be realized for the overwhelming majority of the nation's former slaves, who numbered about 3.9 million.

What Exactly Was Promised?



General William Tecumseh Sherman in May 1865. Portrait by Mathew Brady.

We have been taught in school that the source of the policy of “40 acres and a mule” was Union General William T. Sherman’s Special Field Order No. 15, issued on Jan. 16, 1865. (That account is half-right: Sherman prescribed the 40 acres in that Order, but not the mule. The mule would come later.) But what many accounts leave out is that this idea for massive land redistribution actually was the result of a discussion that Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton held four days *before* Sherman issued the Order, with 20 leaders of the black community in Savannah, Ga., where Sherman was headquartered following his famous March to the Sea. The meeting was unprecedented in American history.

Today, we commonly use the phrase “40 acres and a mule,” but few of us have read the Order itself. Three of its parts are relevant here. Section one bears repeating in full: “The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes [sic] now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.”

Section two specifies that these new communities, moreover, would be governed entirely by black people themselves: ” ... on the islands, and in the settlements hereafter to be established, no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves ... By the laws of war, and orders of the President of the United States, the negro [sic] is free and must be dealt with as such.”

Finally, section three specifies the allocation of land: ” ... each family shall have a plot of not more than (40) acres of tillable ground, and when it borders on some water channel, with not more than 800 feet water front, in the

possession of which land the military authorities will afford them protection, until such time as they can protect themselves, or until Congress shall regulate **their** title.”

With this Order, *400,000 acres* of land — “a strip of coastline stretching from Charleston, South Carolina, to the St. John’s River in Florida, including Georgia’s Sea Islands and the mainland thirty miles in from the coast,” as Barton Myers reports — would be redistributed to the newly freed slaves. The extent of this Order and its larger implications are mind-boggling, actually.

Who Came Up With the Idea?

Here’s how this radical proposal — which must have completely blown the minds of the rebel Confederates — actually came about. The abolitionists Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens and other Radical Republicans had been actively advocating land redistribution “to break the back of Southern slaveholders’ power,” as Myers observed. But Sherman’s plan only took shape after the meeting that he and Stanton held with those black ministers, at 8:00 p.m., Jan. 12, on the second floor of Charles Green’s mansion on Savannah’s Macon Street. In its broadest strokes, “40 acres and a mule” was *their* idea.

Stanton, aware of the great historical significance of the meeting, presented Henry Ward Beecher (Harriet Beecher Stowe’s famous brother) a verbatim transcript of the discussion, which Beecher read to his congregation at New York’s Plymouth Church and which the New York Daily Tribune printed in full in its . Stanton told Beecher that “for the first time in the history of this nation, the representatives of the government had gone to these poor debased people to ask them what they wanted for themselves.” Stanton had suggested to Sherman that they gather “the leaders of the local Negro community” and

ask them something no one else had apparently thought to ask: “What do you want for your own people” following the war? And what they wanted astonishes us even today.

Who were these 20 thoughtful leaders who exhibited such foresight? They were all ministers, mostly Baptist and Methodist. Most curious of all to me is that 11 of the 20 had been born *free* in slave states, of which 10 had lived as free men in the Confederacy during the course of the Civil War. (The other one, a man named James Lynch, was born free in Maryland, a slave state, and had only moved to the South two years before.) The other nine ministers had been slaves in the South who became “contraband,” and hence free, only because of the Emancipation Proclamation, when Union forces liberated them.

Their chosen leader and spokesman was a Baptist minister named Garrison Frazier, aged 67, who had been born in Granville, N.C., and was a slave until 1857, “when he purchased freedom for himself and wife for \$1000 in gold and silver,” as the New York Daily Tribune reported. Rev. Frazier had been “in the ministry for thirty-five years,” and it was he who bore the responsibility of answering the 12 questions that Sherman and Stanton put to the group. The stakes for the future of the Negro people were high.

And Frazier and his brothers did not disappoint. What did they tell Sherman and Stanton that the Negro most wanted? *Land!* “The way we can best take care of ourselves,” Rev. Frazier began his answer to the crucial third question, “is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor ... and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare ... We want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own.” And when asked next where the freed slaves “would rather live — whether scattered among the whites or in colonies by themselves,” without missing a beat, Brother Frazier (as the transcript calls him) replied that “I would prefer to live by ourselves, for there is a prejudice against us in the South that will take years to get over ... ” When polled individually around the table, all but one — James Lynch, 26, the

man who had moved south from Baltimore — said that they agreed with Frazier. Four days later, Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, after President Lincoln approved it.

What Became of the Land That Was Promised?

The response to the Order was immediate. When the transcript of the meeting was reprinted in the black publication *Christian Recorder*, an editorial note intoned that “From this it will be seen that the colored people down South are not so dumb as many suppose them to be,” reflecting North-South, slave-free black class tensions that continued well into the modern civil rights movement. The effect throughout the South was electric: As Eric Foner explains, “the freedmen hastened to take advantage of the Order.” Baptist minister Ulysses L. Houston, one of the group that had met with Sherman, led 1,000 blacks to Skidaway Island, Ga., where they established a self-governing community with Houston as the “black governor.” And by June, “40,000 freedmen had been settled on 400,000 acres of ‘Sherman Land.’” By the way, Sherman later ordered that the army could lend the new settlers mules; hence the phrase, “40 acres and a mule.”

And what happened to this astonishingly visionary program, which would have fundamentally altered the course of American race relations? Andrew Johnson, Lincoln’s successor and a sympathizer with the South, overturned the Order in the fall of 1865, and, as Barton Myers sadly concludes, “returned the land along the South Carolina, Georgia and Florida coasts to the planters who had originally owned it” — to the very people who had declared war on the United States of America.

Fifty of the 100 Amazing Facts will be published on The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross website. Read all 100 Facts on The Root.

Forgetting Why We Remember

By David W. Blight, www.nytimes.com

May 25th, 2015

Photo



Credit Owen Freeman

Photo by: Owen Freeman

MOST Americans know that Memorial Day is about honoring the nation's war dead. It is also a holiday devoted to department store sales, half-marathons, picnics, baseball and auto racing. But where did it begin, who created it, and why?

At the end of the Civil War, Americans faced a formidable challenge: how to memorialize 625,000 dead soldiers, Northern and Southern. As Walt Whitman mused, it was “the dead, the dead, the dead — *our* dead — or South or North, ours all” that preoccupied the country. After all, if the same number of Americans per capita had died in Vietnam as died in the Civil War, four million names would be on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, instead of 58,000.

Officially, in the North, Memorial Day emerged in 1868 when the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union veterans’ organization, called on communities to conduct grave-decorating ceremonies. On May 30, funereal events attracted thousands of people at hundreds of cemeteries in countless towns, cities and mere crossroads. By the 1870s, one could not live in an American town, North or South, and be unaware of the spring ritual.

But the practice of decorating graves — which gave rise to an alternative name, Decoration Day — didn’t start with the 1868 events, nor was it an exclusively Northern practice. In 1866 the Ladies’ Memorial Association of Columbus, Ga., chose April 26, the anniversary of Gen. Joseph Johnston’s final surrender to Gen. William T. Sherman, to commemorate fallen Confederate soldiers. Later, both May 10, the anniversary of Gen. Stonewall Jackson’s death, and June 3, the birthday of Jefferson Davis, were designated Confederate Memorial Day in different states.

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Memorial Days were initially occasions of sacred bereavement, and from the war’s end to the early 20th century they helped forge national reconciliation around soldierly sacrifice, regardless of cause. In North and South, orators and participants frequently called Memorial Day an “American All Saints Day,” likening it to the European Catholic tradition of whole towns marching to churchyards to honor dead loved ones.

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But the ritual quickly became the tool of partisan memory as well, at least through the violent Reconstruction years. In the South, Memorial Day was a means of confronting the Confederacy's defeat but without repudiating its cause. Some Southern orators stressed Christian notions of noble sacrifice. Others, however, used the ritual for Confederate vindication and renewed assertions of white supremacy. Blacks had a place in this Confederate narrative, but only as time-warped loyal slaves who were supposed to remain frozen in the past.

The Lost Cause tradition thrived in Confederate Memorial Day rhetoric; the Southern dead were honored as the true "patriots," defenders of their homeland, sovereign rights, a natural racial order and a "cause" that had been overwhelmed by "numbers and resources" but never defeated on battlefields.

Yankee Memorial Day orations often righteously claimed the high ground of blood sacrifice to save the Union and destroy slavery. It was not uncommon for a speaker to honor the fallen of both sides, but still lay the war guilt on the "rebel dead." Many a lonely widow or mother at these observances painfully endured expressions of joyous death on the altars of national survival.

Some events even stressed the Union dead as the source of a new egalitarian America, and a civic rather than a racial or ethnic definition of citizenship. In Wilmington, Del., in 1869, Memorial Day included a procession of Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians and Catholics; white Grand Army of the Republic posts in parade with a black post; and the "Mount Vernon Cornet Band (colored)" keeping step with the "Irish Nationalists with the harp and the sunburst flag of Erin."

But for the earliest and most remarkable Memorial Day, we must return to where the war began. By the spring of 1865, after a long siege and prolonged bombardment, the beautiful port city of Charleston, S.C., lay in ruin and

occupied by Union troops. Among the first soldiers to enter and march up Meeting Street singing liberation songs was the 21st United States Colored Infantry; their commander accepted the city's official surrender.

Whites had largely abandoned the city, but thousands of blacks, mostly former slaves, had remained, and they conducted a series of commemorations to declare their sense of the meaning of the war.

The largest of these events, forgotten until I had some extraordinary luck in an archive at Harvard, took place on May 1, 1865. During the final year of the war, the Confederates had converted the city's Washington Race Course and Jockey Club into an outdoor prison. Union captives were kept in horrible conditions in the interior of the track; at least 257 died of disease and were hastily buried in a mass grave behind the grandstand.

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After the Confederate evacuation of Charleston black workmen went to the site, reburied the Union dead properly, and built a high fence around the cemetery. They whitewashed the fence and built an archway over an entrance on which they inscribed the words, "Martyrs of the Race Course."

The symbolic power of this Low Country planter aristocracy's bastion was not lost on the freedpeople, who then, in cooperation with white missionaries and teachers, staged a parade of 10,000 on the track. A New York Tribune correspondent witnessed the event, describing "a procession of friends and mourners as South Carolina and the United States never saw before."

The procession was led by 3,000 black schoolchildren carrying armloads of roses and singing the Union marching song "John Brown's Body." Several hundred black women followed with baskets of flowers, wreaths and crosses. Then came black men marching in cadence, followed by contingents of Union

infantrymen. Within the cemetery enclosure a black children's choir sang "We'll Rally Around the Flag," the "Star-Spangled Banner" and spirituals before a series of black ministers read from the Bible.

After the dedication the crowd dispersed into the infield and did what many of us do on Memorial Day: enjoyed picnics, listened to speeches and watched soldiers drill. Among the full brigade of Union infantrymen participating were the famous 54th Massachusetts and the 34th and 104th United States Colored Troops, who performed a special double-columned march around the gravesite.

The war was over, and Memorial Day had been founded by African-Americans in a ritual of remembrance and consecration. The war, they had boldly announced, had been about the triumph of their emancipation over a slaveholders' republic. They were themselves the true patriots.

Despite the size and some newspaper coverage of the event, its memory was suppressed by white Charlestonians in favor of their own version of the day. From 1876 on, after white Democrats took back control of South Carolina politics and the Lost Cause defined public memory and race relations, the day's racecourse origin vanished.

Indeed, 51 years later, the president of the Ladies' Memorial Association of Charleston received an inquiry from a United Daughters of the Confederacy official in New Orleans asking if it was true that blacks had engaged in such a burial rite in 1865; the story had apparently migrated westward in community memory. Mrs. S. C. Beckwith, leader of the association, responded tersely, "I regret that I was unable to gather any official information in answer to this."

Beckwith may or may not have known about the 1865 event; her own "official" story had become quite different and had no place for the former slaves' march on their masters' racecourse. In the struggle over memory and meaning in any

society, some stories just get lost while others attain mainstream recognition.

AS we mark the Civil War's sesquicentennial, we might reflect on Frederick Douglass's words in an 1878 Memorial Day speech in New York City, in which he unwittingly gave voice to the forgotten Charleston marchers.

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He said the war was not a struggle of mere "sectional character," but a "war of ideas, a battle of principles." It was "a war between the old and the new, slavery and freedom, barbarism and civilization ... and in dead earnest for something beyond the battlefield." With or against Douglass, we still debate the "something" that the Civil War dead represent.

The old racetrack is gone, but an oval roadway survives on the site in Hampton Park, named for Wade Hampton, former Confederate general and the governor of South Carolina after the end of Reconstruction. The old gravesite of the Martyrs of the Race Course is gone too; they were reinterred in the 1880s at a national cemetery in Beaufort, S.C.

But the event is no longer forgotten. Last year I had the great honor of helping a coalition of Charlestonians, including the mayor, Joseph P. Riley, dedicate a marker to this first Memorial Day by a reflecting pool in Hampton Park.

By their labor, their words, their songs and their solemn parade on their former owners' racecourse, black Charlestonians created for themselves, and for us, the Independence Day of a Second American Revolution.

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A Century Later, a Little-Known Mass Hanging of Black Soldiers Still Haunts Us

By James Jeffrey, progressive.org

December 8th, 2017

After Hurricane Harvey devastated Houston in September, recovery and clean-up workers discovered that vandals had smeared red paint over a historical marker at the one-time location of Camp Logan, recently rededicated to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Houston “riot” of 1917.

The paint covered the segment of the inscription that explained the history of the Third Battalion of the 24th United States Infantry, a predominantly black unit assigned to guard the camp during its construction shortly after the United States entered World War I.

Beneath the paint, the words read: “The Black Soldiers’ August 23, 1917, armed revolt in response to Houston’s Jim Crow Laws and police harassment resulted in the camps most publicized incident, the ‘Houston Mutiny and Riot of 1917.’ ” The Houston riot grew out of a confrontation between the soldiers and Houston city police, at the end of which sixteen white people were dead, including five policemen, with four soldiers also killed. It was one of the only riots in U.S. history in which more white people died than black people.

At the resulting three courts martial, the first of which was the largest one in U.S. military history, a total of 118 enlisted black soldiers were indicted, with 110 found guilty. Nineteen black men were executed by hanging and fifty-three received life sentences.

For a century, families of the executed soldiers have lived with the memories and loss. Relatives alive today grew up hearing their families talk about the soldiers' fates, which served as the catalyst to learn more, and to work for justice to make amends.

"My family was upset when I started looking into it," admits Jason Holt, a relative of Private Hawkins, one of the soldiers hung.

Holt has a 100-year-old letter written by Private Hawkins to his mother the night before his execution, telling her not to be upset about him taking his "seat in heaven," and of his innocence.

A 100-year-old letter from Private Hawkins to his mother the night before his execution tells her not to be upset about him taking his "seat in heaven," and of his innocence.

"They sent those soldiers into the most hostile environment imaginable," Charles Anderson, a relative of Sergeant William Nesbit, one of the hung soldiers, told me over the the phone. "There was Jim Crow law, racist cops, racist civilians, laws against them being treated fairly in the street cars, while the workers building [Logan] camp hated [the soldiers'] presence."

"The riot was a problem created by community policing in a hostile environment," agrees Paul Matthews, founder of Houston's Buffalo Soldiers National Museum, which examines the role of African-American soldiers during U.S. military history. "It's up to people now to decide whether there are lessons relevant to the present."

A majority of the soldiers posted at Camp Logan were raised in the South and familiar with segregation and Jim Crow laws. But as army servicemen, they expected fair treatment during their service in Houston. The police and public officials in that city viewed the presence of the black soldiers as a threat. Many Houstonians were concerned that if the black soldiers were shown the same respect as white soldiers, black residents might come to expect similar treatment.

Tensions grew between the troops guarding Camp Logan and the Houston police and locals. The sight of black men wearing uniforms and carrying guns incensed white residents. Many Houstonians were concerned that if the black soldiers were shown the same respects as white soldiers, black residents might come to expect similar treatment. The soldiers themselves were angered by the “Whites Only” signs, being called the n-word by white Houstonians, and streetcar conductors demanding they sit in the rear.

“The men did not have a fair trial,” says a great-granddaughter of one of the policemen killed. “I have no doubt about the likelihood the men executed had nothing to do with the deaths.”

Then, in August, the police arrested a black soldier for interfering with the arrest of a black woman. When one of the battalion’s military police went to inquire about the arrested soldier, an argument ensued, resulting in the military policeman fleeing the police station amid shots, before being arrested himself.

Rumours—which turned out to be false—reached Camp Logan that the military man had been killed and that a white mob was approaching the camp. There was no mob, but the black soldiers had good reason to be fearful. The country was rife with racial tensions. Just two years later cities would erupt in unrest during the “Red Summer,” and in 1921 a white mob in Tulsa, Oklahoma, murdered hundreds of innocent black people.

More than 100 soldiers grabbed rifles and headed into downtown Houston. During a two-hour rampage, the soldiers killed sixteen white residents, including five policemen. The next day martial law was declared in Houston, and the following day the unit was dispatched back to its base in New Mexico. The court martial soon followed.

“It was a dark, rainy night during the riot,” Anderson says. “At the trial the civilian witnesses couldn’t identify one soldier firing shots that killed people.”

Seven mutineers agreed to testify against the others in exchange for clemency.

Only one lawyer represented the sixty-three soldiers during the first court martial. The thirteen sentenced to death on November 28 were not given right to appeal. On December 11, they were taken by truck to the scaffold where thirteen ropes dangled from a crossbeam.

“The men did not have a fair trial,” says Sandra Hajtman, great-granddaughter of one of the policemen killed. “I have no doubt about the likelihood the men executed had nothing to do with the deaths.”

Only two white officers faced courts-martial, and they were released. Not a single white civilian was brought to trial.

In Houston, a rapidly growing city, knowledge of the event is mixed. Most newcomers know nothing about it. But that is changing.

“There was no public acknowledgment of it for a long time,” Lila Rakoczy, program coordinator of military sites and oral history programs at the Texas Historical Commission, said in a phone interview. “The centennial of the American entry into World War I has probably helped heighten awareness and encouraged people to talk about it.”

“The riot was a problem created by community policing in a hostile environment. It’s up to people now to decide whether there are lessons relevant to the present.”

-Paul Matthews, founder of Houston’s Buffalo Soldiers National Museum

Earlier this year, Angela Holder, a history professor at Houston Community College and the great niece of Corporal Jesse Moore, one of the soldiers hung, helped lobby for gravestones from the Veterans Association for unmarked graves in a Houston cemetery of two soldiers killed during the riot. But more still remains to be done for the soldiers, the relatives say.

“We tried during the Obama presidency for a posthumous pardon and were on the list but missed out,” says Holder. “Perhaps we can approach a Texas politician or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to help.”

Earlier this year petitions for the pardons were sent to the Trump White House. The relatives are still awaiting a response as the 100th anniversary of the day of execution approaches.

According to a written account by one of the soldiers overseeing the execution, the thirteen men executed on December 11, 1917, showed great bravery that moved all those watching. None made any attempt to resist or even speak as they were taken from the trucks to the scaffold.

“Not a word out of any of you men now!” Sergeant William Nesbit proclaimed to his men in his final living moment.

James Jeffrey is a British journalist who divides his time between America, East Africa, and the UK. His writing appears in various international media.

The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars

By **Julia Ioffe**, www.theatlantic.com

October 21st, 2017



A man shows the headline of the 'Pravda' in front of the entrance of the building of the Soviet newspaper in Moscow on August 28, 1991.

Photo by: Gerard Fouet / Getty

From propaganda posters to Facebook ads, 80-plus years of Russian meddling.

According to a spate of recent reports, accounts tied to the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency—a Russian “troll factory”—used social media and Google during the 2016 electoral campaign to deepen political and racial tensions in the United States. The trolls, according to an interview with the Russian TV network TV Rain, were directed to focus their tweets and

comments on socially divisive issues, like guns. But another consistent theme has been Russian trolls focusing on issues of race. Some of the Russian ads placed on Facebook apparently targeted Ferguson and Baltimore, which were rocked by protests after police killings of unarmed black men; another showed a black woman firing a rifle. Other ads played on fears of illegal immigrants and Muslims, and groups like Black Lives Matter.

Except for the technology used, however, these tactics are not exactly new. They are natural outgrowths of a central component of covert influence campaigns, like the one Russia launched against the United States during the 2016 election: make discord louder; divide and conquer. "Covert influence campaigns don't create divisions on the ground, they amplify divisions on the ground," says Michael Hayden, who ran the NSA under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and then became CIA director. During the Cold War, the Kremlin similarly sought to plant fake news and foment discontent, but was limited by the low-tech methods available at the time. "Before, the Soviets would plant information in Indian papers and hope it would get picked up by our papers," says John Sipher, who ran the CIA's Russia desk during George W. Bush's first term. The Soviets planted misinformation about the AIDs epidemic as a Pentagon creation, according to Sipher, as well as the very concept of a nuclear winter. "Now, because of the technology, you can jump right in," Sipher says.



Neither is playing on racial tensions inside the United States a new Russian tactic. In fact, it predates even the Cold War. In 1932, for instance, Dmitri Moor, the Soviet Union's most famous propaganda poster artist, created a poster that cried, "Freedom to the prisoners of Scottsboro!" It was a reference to the Scottsboro Boys, nine black teenagers who were falsely accused of raping two white women in Alabama, and then repeatedly—wrongly—convicted by all-white Southern juries. The case became a symbol of the injustices of the Jim Crow South, and the young Soviet state milked it for all the propagandistic value it could.

It was part of a plan put in place in 1928 by the Comintern—the Communist International, whose mission was to spread the communist revolution around the world. The plan initially called for recruiting Southern blacks and pushing for “self-determination in the Black Belt.” By 1930, the Comintern had escalated the aims of its covert mission, and decided to work toward establishing a separate black state in the South, which would provide it with a beachhead for spreading the revolution to North America.

The Soviets also exploited the oppression of Southern blacks for their own economic benefit. It was the height of the Great Depression, and the Soviet Union was positioning itself not only as a workers’ utopia, but as a racial utopia as well, one where ethnic, national, and religious divisions didn’t exist. In addition to luring thousands of white American workers, it brought over African-American workers and sharecroppers with the promise of the freedom to work and live unburdened by the violent restrictions of Jim Crow. In return, they would help the Soviets build their fledgling cotton industry in Central Asia. Several hundred answered the call, and though many eventually went back—or died in the Gulag—some of their descendants remain in Russia. One of Russia’s best-known television hosts, for instance, is Yelena Khanga, the granddaughter of Oliver Golden, an agronomist from Tuskegee University who moved with his communist Jewish-American wife to Uzbekistan to develop the cotton industry there.

The beginning of the Cold War coincided with the beginning of the civil rights movement, and the two became intertwined—both in how the Soviets used the racial strife, and how the Cold War propelled the cause of civil rights forward. “Early on in the Cold War, there was a recognition that the U.S. couldn’t lead the world if it was seen as repressing people of color,” says Mary Dudziak, a legal historian at Emory, whose book *Cold War Civil Rights* is the seminal work on the topic. When, in September 1957, the Arkansas governor Orval Faubus deployed the National Guard to keep nine black students from integrating the Central High School in Little Rock, the standoff was covered by

newspapers around the world, many of which noted the discrepancy between the values America expressed and hoped to spread around the world, and how it implemented them at home.

The Soviets, again, took full advantage of the opportunity. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the newspaper of the communist youth organization in the USSR, ran a sensational story, complete with photographs, about the conflict under the headline, “Troops Advance Against Children!” *Izvestia*, the second main Soviet daily, also extensively covered the Little Rock crisis, noting at one point that “right now, behind the facade of the so-called ‘American democracy,’ a tragedy is unfolding which cannot but arouse ire and indignation in the heart of every honest man.” The story went on:

The patrons of Governor Faubus ... who dream of nooses and dynamite for persons with different-colored skins, advocates of hooliganism who throw rocks at defenseless Negro children—these gentlemen have the audacity to talk about “democracy” and speak as supporters of “freedom.” In fact it is impossible to imagine a greater insult to democracy and freedom than an American diplomat's speech from the tribunal of the U.S. General Assembly, a speech in which Washington was pictured as the “champion” of the rights of the Hungarian people.

The point then, as it was in 2016, was to discredit the American system, to keep the Soviets (and, later, Russians) loyal to their own system instead of hungering for Western-style democracy. But it was also used in Soviet propaganda around the world for a similar purpose. “This is a principal Soviet propaganda theme,” says Dudziak of the Soviet messaging at the time. “What’s

described as communist propaganda that circulated in India overplays the story sometimes but also very maudlin stories about things that actually happened. Sometimes, in *Pravda*, all they needed to do was to reprint something that appeared in *Time Magazine*. Just the facts would themselves inflame international opinion. On top of that, the Soviets would push the envelope.”

This came at a critical time for time for the United States. After World War II, the U.S. was a new global power locked in an ideological struggle with the Soviet Union. As the United States tried to convince countries to join its sphere by taking up democracy and liberal values, the U.S. government was competing with the Soviets in parts of the world where images of white cops turning fire hoses and attack dogs on black protesters did not sit well—especially considering that this was coinciding with the wave African countries declaring independence from white colonial rulers. “Here at the United Nations I can see clearly the harm that the riots in Little Rock are doing to our foreign relations,” Henry Cabot Lodge, then the U.S. ambassador to the UN, wrote to President Eisenhower in 1957. “More than two-thirds of the world is non-white and the reactions of the representatives of these people is easy to see. I suspect that we lost several votes on the Chinese communist item because of Little Rock.”

“The Russian objective then was to disrupt U.S. international relations and undermine U.S. power in the world, and undermine the appeal of U.S. democracy to other countries,” says Dudziak, and Lodge was reflecting a central concern at the State Department at the time: The Soviet propaganda was working. American diplomats were reporting back both their chagrin and the difficulty of preaching democracy when images of the violence around the civil rights movement were reported all over the world, and amplified by Soviet or communist propaganda. On a trip to Latin America, then-Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife were met with protestors chanting, “Little Rock! Little Rock!” Secretary of State John Foster Dulles complained

that “this situation was ruining our foreign policy. The effect of this in Asia and Africa will be worse for us than Hungary was for the Russians.”

Ultimately, he prevailed on Eisenhower to insert a passage into his national address on Little Rock that directly addressed the discrepancy that Soviet propaganda was highlighting—and spinning as American hypocrisy.

Whenever the Soviet Union was criticized for its human rights abuses, the rebuttal became, “And you lynch Negroes.”

Moscow never abandoned these tactics, which became known as “whataboutism,” even after the Soviet Union collapsed. Russian propaganda outlets like Russia Today—now known as RT—have always focused on domestic strife in the United States, be it homelessness or Occupy Wall Street or the Ferguson protests. The Facebook ads focusing on divisive issues like Black Lives Matter are just another page from the old Soviet handbook. The difference this time is that the Russians got better at penetrating the American discussions on these fraught subjects. They became a more effective bellows, amplifying the fire Americans built.

The good news, though, is that America can do things to disarm the propaganda. In the 1950s and 60s, for example, this was one of the reasons that American presidents pushed through various civil rights victories, culminating in the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. This time, Americans can stop blaming the Russians and look at ourselves for what we do to fan the flames—to a far greater extent than the Russians ever could or do. “If there’s anyone to blame, it’s us,” says Sipher. “If we accept the stoking, it’s our fault.”

Part Two

Original Collection of
Historical Retrospectives

LINCOLN'S ATTEMPT AT ERASING SIN

One cannot remove the consequences of their sins.

While King David was a man after God's own heart, that likeness could not remove the consequences incurred by his sin due to his lust. David took the life of a man whose wife he desired. Whether or not the United States is a nation after God's own heart is up for debate between those who care to argue it. But, like David, the United States cannot remove its original sin born from its own lust: the stealing of souls to build a nation. But what if America could remove itself of its original sin? Sin is no longer desirable if the "benefit" loses its luster. As the number of free Blacks increased, White men created the American Colonization Society (ACS) to address the "problem." Liberia was founded in 1824 and thousands of free Blacks inhabited the new land. In the United States however, the original sin maintained its luster.

Abraham Lincoln attempted to remove the stain of sin when it grew into war. On August 14, 1862, Lincoln met with Black leaders of the day to advise them that the best way for Black to help the Union effort was to leave. Lincoln declared to the leaders:

*"Nevertheless, I repeat, without the institution of slavery and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence. It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated... Now, if you could give a start to White people, you would open a wide door for many to be made free."*¹

A friend of the ACS, Lincoln at the beginning of his presidency, attempted numerous resettlement plans with ACS support, however they were all failed attempts. In 1862, Lincoln explored a plan to resettle of Blacks out of the United States. The Chiriquí Province of Panama, founded by Ambrose Thompson, was chosen as the new home for freed Blacks; aptly named Linconia. Congress

¹ <https://www.learner.org/workshops/primarysources/emancipation/docs/address.html>

appropriated \$600,000 to Thompson and the resettlement plan. However, the plan fizzled out once dissent came from various central American nations.

Lincoln supported the plan of Bernard Kock to resettle Blacks on an island off the coast of Haiti. For failing to properly vet the ability of Kock to facilitate a colony in Haiti, Lincoln was left to stew in his own anger over the colony's failure. He sent a ship to return the roughly 350 survivors back to the United States. Nothing marked the failure of Lincoln's ambition to remove Black people than the eventual use of Blacks to the save the Union.

Lincoln's attempts at a viable solution is a cautionary tale. While it is admirable to desire the restoration of a divided nation, leveraging a reunion cannot be done by scapegoating the victims. Required is a level of atonement that goes beyond simply removing the reminders of one's own impurity. Lincoln's ambition says something else. How does a son atone for the sin of his father? To the question of if America can remove its original sin and the stains thereof, the answer is no. However, how are her generations to move forward under a burden placed upon them by their ancestors? Whites have wrestled with answering this question; those who have failed miserably did so professing good intentions. Lincoln understood that Black people should be afforded all the dignity that humanity prescribed all men. However, to see Black people as his equal was a matter entirely different.

A current consequence of America's slavery past is a confusion of humanity in the American consciousness. Such confusion has facilitated a climate where the unlawful death of a twelve year old boy at the hands of law enforcement can go unchallenged due to the color of that child's skin. America cannot reconcile with itself over her original sin; to do so would mean atoning for it and without atonement, there can be no reconciliation. Rather, America chooses to ignore it and encourages the same from African America as a point of negotiation as we strive to participate in the America our ancestors built. America posits living in peace with Black people as a their conforming to the order or removing themselves from it. However, Black people are not the original sin birth from America's loins. Reconciliation will require America to find the courage to face

her original sin and accept her Black brethren; her blessing in disguise. America must learn to live in the aftermath of its sin. By the looks of things, this is one lesson America has no desire to attempt.

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Resources

- National Museum of African American History and Culture—<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/educators>
- Smithsonian Education—http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/african_american_resources.html
- National Education Association—<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm>
- National Archives—<https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/black-history.html>
- PBS.com—<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2015/01/black-history-month-resources-for-the-classroom/>
- WHYY—<http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/black-history-month-facts-and-films/#.WnDa8KinE2w>
- Zinn Education Project—<https://zinnedproject.org/?s=black+history>
- Atlanta Black Star—<http://atlantablackstar.com/category/global-black-history/>
- Library of Congress—<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/commemorative-observations/african-american.php>
- Anti-Defamation League—<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/black-history-month>

Thank You

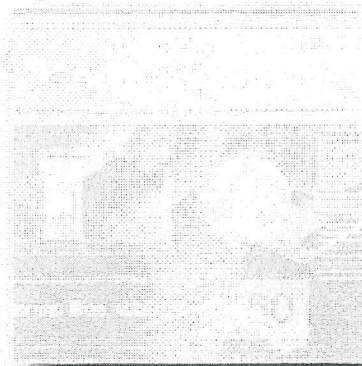
To the Ancestors,

For your relentless pursuit of freedom and for your righteous struggle for justice. The African Diaspora in the Americas is in debt to you for our strength, courage and resolve

To My Ancestors,

Thank you for enduring the whip, acres in Attapulgus, escape to the North and for South Jersey.

Thank you for America



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