

THE EROSION OF THE RACIAL FRONTIER: SETTLER
COLONIALISM AND THE HISTORY OF
BLACK MONTANA, 1880-1930

by

Anthony William Wood

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Arts

in

History

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April 2018

©COPYRIGHT

by

Anthony William Wood

2018

All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the history faculty at Carroll College and Dr. Swarthout who pushed history majors such as myself to work as interns with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office in Helena, Montana. It was at SHPO that I was so fortunate to work for Kate Hampton, who had already worked tirelessly keeping the *Montana's African American Heritage Places Project* alive for over a decade, and who continued to lead and guide me while I researched and wrote for the project for three years. Classes I took at MSU, especially Dr. Mark Fiege's seminar on the American West, offered strikingly new approaches that opened up different methods as well as mountains of scholarship that would profoundly inform how I thought about race and the American West. I am further indebted to my wonderful committee members, Drs. Mary Murphey, Amanda Hendrix-Komoto, Billy Smith, and my chair, Mark Fiege for all their time spent talking with me about sections of my thesis, different approaches I might try, or even just listening as I tried to organize my ideas. I am also thankful and sorry to my office-mates Amanda Hardin and Jen Dunn who were unlucky enough to work within ear-shot.

I would also like to thank my parents for their support throughout my life, and specifically my Dad for reading so much of my work and always urging me to put in the effort to be a better writer. Finally I would like to thank my wife Steffany, who has been a part of this work since we first met while creating a map of the black community in Helena when I was still a college intern working on *Montana's African American Heritage Places Project*. Her patience, support, and expertise is the only reason I am able to succeed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: COLONIAL EROSION	1
1. THE INVISIBLE MIGRATION: BLACK SETTLERS TO MONTANA, 1880-1917	25
2. THE WASHINGTONIAN WEST: SOCIAL IDEOLOGY AND THE AND THE POLITICS OF RACE IN MONTANA	51
Photo Gallery One.....	82
3. THINKING WITH MAGPIES: THE BLACK WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE AND THE LOGIC OF SETTLEMENT IN MONTANA’S CONSERVATION MOVEMENT	89
Photo Gallery Two.....	121
4. LEGISLATING COLONIAL EROSION: SEXUALITY, THE FAMILY, AND ANTI-MISCEGENATION LAW IN MONTANA	127
5. HISTORY AMONG THE SEDIMENTS: ON THE ENTANGLEMENTS OF RACE AND REGION	155
EPILOGUE: BLACK MONTANA’S CRITIQUE OF SETTLER COLONIALISM.....	180
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	189
APPENDICES	206
APPENDIX A: Population and Census Data.....	207
APPENDIX B: Homestead Research	213

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1. African American Men aboard Steamboat	82
1.2. African American Settlers near Ravalli and St. Ignatius	82
1.3. 25 th Infantry Fort Shaw	83
1.4. 10 th Cavalry Fort Custer.....	83
1.5. William C. Irvin, Policeman, Helena 1890.....	84
1.6. African American Waiters, MT Legislature Dinner, 1903	85
1.7. African American Chauffeur, Helena 1915	85
1.8. African American Student, Helena, 1910	86
1.9. Howard-Crump House, Helena, 1895.....	86
1.10. Masthead, <i>The New Age</i> , 1902.....	87
1.11 Masthead, <i>The Montana Plaindealer</i> , 1910.....	87
1.12. Zanzibar Excerpt, 1907	88
2.1. “York” by Charles Russell.....	121
2.2. 10 th Cavalry in Glacier National Park.....	121
2.3. 25 th Infantry Bicycle Corps in Yellowstone	122
2.4. 25 th Infantry Bicycle Corps atop Mammoth Hot Springs	122
2.5. 9 th Cavalry camp near Jackson Lake, WY	123
2.6. 9 th Cavalry pictured with “Beaver Dick” Leigh, 1896.....	123
2.7. African American Men with Instruments, Yellowstone, 1901	124
2.8. African American Men, Yellowstone, 1901	124

LIST OF FIGURES CONTINUED

Figure	Page
2.9. Pleasant Hour Club Picnic	125
2.10 African American Cowboy, Forsyth, MT	125
2.11. African American Men and Women Harvesting Ice	126

ABSTRACT

From 1880-1910, Montana was home to one of the most vibrant and diverse African American communities in the Rocky Mountain West. By the onset of World War II, however, the black population had fallen by over fifty percent, and Montana was well on its way to being the least black state in the US by the twenty-first century. In *The Erosion of the Racial Frontier*, I argue that scholars of African American studies and the American West must consider the sedimented afterlife of US settler colonialism if those fields are to articulate a distinctly western narrative of African American history. My approach draws on colonial and settler colonial theories to examine the history of African Americans in Montana from 1880-1930. As a non-indigenous, non-white, community of color—or what Lorenzo Veracini would call ‘subaltern exogenous others’—black westerners fall into an uncertain space in settler colonial theory. As an ongoing structure, settler colonialism continues after the violent appropriation of Indigenous lands appears to culminate. The thesis of *The Erosion of the Racial Frontier* is two-fold: The logic of settlement together with the logic of anti-blackness created distinctly western categories of racial exclusion that is evident in the archive of black Montana. This western, colonial racism acted as an erosive force across the state, targeting the stability and place identity of western black communities. Moreover, the society that developed in tandem with colonial erosion necessarily continues to live with the sedimented afterlife of settler colonialism. As such, the history of Black Montana can be understood as individual and collective experiences of thousands of black Montanans struggling against and subverting the settler colonial project in western North America.

INTRODUCTION

COLONIAL EROSION:

UNEARTHING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN
THE SETTLER COLONIAL WEST

In summer 2015, while working as a research historian for the Montana State Historical Society's African American Heritage Places Project, I helped create a large, digital map of Helena, Montana.¹ The State Historic Preservation Office's GIS specialist skillfully stitched together over forty individual Sanborn Fire Insurance sheets, creating a mosaic of the town as it existed in 1892.² Sanborn Company cartographers carefully denoted the shape, materials, and usage of buildings to meticulous scale in thousands of cities across the United States. For the project's purposes, the new map showed over one hundred buildings and houses that were owned or rented by Helena's African American community between 1880 and 1930. Information from the 1910 and 1930 censuses, over thirty years of Polk City Directories, and a wealth of local knowledge helped map one of the largest and most vibrant black communities in Montana. The 1892 map layer was then georectified to a current satellite image, illustrating what recent technology can contribute to the study of a sense of place.

¹ As a project historian with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, my research entailed compiling, coding, and analyzing census records, addresses, places of employment, birth and marriage certificates, city directories, and oral histories of black Montanans from 1890-1930. In researching twelve communities, dozens of businesses, nearly one hundred families, and over a thousand individuals spanning a period of four decades, my role in this project perhaps naturally lead me to search for ways to tell such an expansive, yet intricately connected history.

² 1892 represented the closest year in which a Sanborn map was rendered to the buildings that were represented in the African American community. Structures built after the 1892 were redrawn to what was represented on the 1930 Helena Sanborn, a version not available due to the post 1922 copyright standards.

The map also told a slightly ominous tale to those who knew what to look for. In the several distinct black neighborhoods and the lively downtown business district that held dozens of black enterprises throughout the years, fewer than twenty percent of all houses, tenements, or storefronts once occupied by African Americans remained. Urban Renewal initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s removed many buildings from Montana's Capital city. The targets were, as in many cities, areas of poorer housing, or damaged and neglected commercial buildings. This leveling was preceded by the demolition of dozens of historic homes in Helena's shaded residential quarters during the mid-twentieth century. What the Helena map shows is neither the evils of thoughtless development nor Urban Renewal officials' targeted racism. It is unlikely that the owners of historic houses, city officials, or developers had any idea that the piles of debris they created were once the stores and neighborhoods of Montana's historic black community. By the mid-twentieth century, there was no black community present in Helena to fight for the preservation of its cultural resources. This was what the map so poignantly spoke to—not the physical removal of the black community per se—but the ongoing, intangible legacy of *erosion*, scouring the history of African Americans from the land as well as their experiences and stories from the collective memory of the community.

When Euro-Americans invaded and settled the region, these newcomers began establishing a distinctly western structure of racism that worked in tandem with settler colonialism. Under this new structure, the “whitening of the West” was not an event, but

a constructed goal.³ Evolving economies, cultural aspirations, and prevailing attitudes about race led to the West being viewed (at least by Euro-Americans) as the locus of whiteness. These ideas were created or reinforced on a landscape that still told a violent story of native land appropriation. The legacy of genocide continued well after communities were established or homesteads plotted. It was an understood reality that could not be ignored or forgotten, even with the maturation of the white society. Within this highly racialized structure, the goal was not merely the exploitation or segregation of communities of color, but total exclusion.

In much of the West, with the exception of what historian Quintard Taylor would define as the “Urban Archipelago,” it would appear that the settler colonial project and its distinct brand of western racism in large part succeeded in removing communities of color.⁴ In 2010, fourteen of the twenty least black states by percentage of total population were located in the West. As the 1892 Helena map attests, cultural and social erasure constitutes a significant challenge for historians seeking to uncover and synthesize much of western black history. This is what I refer to as *colonial erosion*—the process in which the settler colonial project created the social vulnerability which targeted the black community and, by doing so, continues to obscure that very history. In this way, from the perspective of a twenty-first century westerner, a homogenous, white West may appear to have developed beyond the effects of racism. Thus the history of the Montana and the West cannot be understood without bearing in mind the erosion caused by the settler

³ For a study dealing specifically with whiteness and the American West, see, Jason Pierce, *Making the White Man's West: Whiteness and the Creations of the American West* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2016).

⁴ Quintard Taylor, “People of Color in the West: A Half Century of Scholarship,” *Western History Quarterly*, 42:3 (Autumn, 2011), 313-318.

colonial logic of anti-blackness. By turning our gaze upon the tangible and intangible effects of this kind of erosion, and by understanding how the lives of black westerners were challenged by the effects of western racism, we are able to articulate a new historical narrative of African Americans in the region as well as the process of exclusion they encountered.⁵

This thesis attempts to plot the course of that exclusion through the colonial archive of Montana while at the same time recovering the occluded—the hidden, blocked, forgotten, and trivialized—voices of black Montanans. *The Erosion of the Racial Frontier* considers the shallow archive of these voices with no small amount of urgency and analytical weight because colonial spaces, as colonial scholars are keen to point out, develop in such a way as to deliberately shroud their very making. The formations of the settler colony bear down on this history in a manner that is ongoing and almost perpetual. Yet so many Montanans fail to see the vestiges of settler formations in either their everyday lives, or even their history. For this reason too, race and racism, which forms the scaffolding onto which the more exterior expressions of violence and identity is fixed, are shrouded, unmoored from the origins of the settler colony. The history of black Montana is thus just one occluded history that speaks to such erosion.

⁵ I was first struck with the possible usefulness of these terms and a similar methodology for the history of the American West while reading the colonial scholar Ann Laura Stoler's, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*. Her critique of postcolonial studies is couched in the inability of scholars to see and study the duress of empire in places and manifestations that are either not apparent under standard methods of inquiry, or so nuanced that they may very well seem invisible. To overcome this, Stoler focuses on the principle that empire and colonialism is a Foucauldian structure whose disciplining powers often have continuous impacts on "soil and soul" long after decolonization. In this way, Stoler goes about studying empire in ways that expose causation and diagnose the nature of the "rot" that remains. And in no uncertain terms, this ability to uncover, decipher, and analyze is what carries so much promise as a method in other fields. See, Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

Terminology and Theory

How I understand the definitions and usefulness of these terms is largely indebted to the work of the anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler. The ruination thesis that Stoler articulates in her work, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, provides theoretical power and flexibility to scholars of race and colonialism in the American West.⁶ However, the precise definition of her terminology—namely *ruination* and *debris*—is still largely unknown beyond certain circles of postcolonial scholars. This lack of intersectionality has meant that other meanings of ruins and ruination inevitably color the way in which many scholars of western and African American history (my intended audience for this thesis in many ways) render these terms in their fields. Ruins and ruination are too easily construed to imply impoverished communities, ramshackle houses, and defeated people who now only resemble the debris of the vibrant population that once existed.⁷ While I think that similar responses are (understandably) made from a position that is not emphasizing the precision of language that Stoler and others rely upon, new ways of expressing the significance of ruins, ruination, and debris may be necessary for new audiences.⁸

⁶ Ruins are particularly visceral imagery in the decolonized regions of the world where factories, plantations, or administrative buildings of a far off metropole now succumb to desert sands or corroding jungle humidity. These are the sites in which Stoler conceives that the soils and souls of the formerly oppressed today continue to be impacted by the imperial debris of the world that supposedly left a half century ago. See, Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁷ Especially when using these terms in the context of the African American community, obvious criticism is levied along the lines that such a characterization is a gross and misleading exaggeration of actual western black communities.

⁸ I seem to have both blessed and cursed to venture into a discursive field in which scholars have already pondered and (re)pondered the weight and power of the language at use. I have learned that certain terms, perhaps innocuous or common, are always doing a specific kind of work in colonial studies. For instance in the case of Montana's nearly unprecedented racial homogeneity, the term "racial" might suggest

Approaching the American West and the history of its race relations as developing within a settler colonial space further problematizes the use of such terms. Using (post)colonial terms so directly would imply that the settler colonial project is past.⁹ This is not my intent. Rather, the settler state is an ongoing societal structure; its processes and effects continue after the “bleeding edge”—characterized by the violence and genocide that commands so much of the field’s focus—fades. The fact, however, that the colonial realities of the American West are nearly invisible beyond places like Standing Rock or the Black Hills is precisely why Stoler’s approach offers so much to the field.

To avoid these various challenges that arise in translation across fields, instead of ruination and debris, might the imagery of colonial “erosion and sedimentation” conjure more appropriate *western* images of ongoing processes? Erosive forces, in a natural sense, act upon the whole of the environment. While floods, winds, or glaciers—in which erosion is most evident—represent distinct events, erosion remains a never-ending process on this planet. Nothing happens beyond the effects of this process. Delving deeper into this geomorphological metaphor, the process of erosion is only half the equation. The ongoing nature of erosion also ensures the unceasing course of sedimentation, wherein all matter from grains of sand to entire mountain ranges are both

that a certain type of history exists, but at the same time it might also belie that formative underpinnings that allow that history to develop in the first place. This is not an epistemological study, however, so I will largely rely on common usage of terms unless otherwise specified.

⁹ For this reason many of the scholars whose work this thesis leans upon have themselves dropped the “post” from both their labels as well as their scholarship.

the product of sedimentation and still being eroded. The patterns and modes of sedimentation inform the structure of the whole living world.¹⁰

I emphasize the relentlessness of this process because it should be—and to some extent has been for the last three decades—the dominant lens through which to understand western history. As this thesis argues, racisms and other insidious features of colonial formations often are at work most when we assume that such issues are mere relics of a more crude or barbaric time, and that the forces which were present at their very making now lie inert—supposedly dead in the past. From this perspective, the concept of a western frontier that ended in 1890 is dangerous and distorting for this very reason. It is to this distortion that Patricia Nelson Limerick responded in her landmark 1987 book, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. Through Limerick’s use of “legacy” and “conquest” both as *active* nouns, as well as her underlying theoretical methodology, she at once closed the door on the viability of Turner’s frontier—by then thoroughly refuted yet still managing to deeply inform the field—and simultaneously opened a door to new possibilities. In the wave of New Western historians that followed *Legacy of Conquest*, and then Richard White’s 1991 *It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, which never even used the word frontier, scholarship on the American West was opened to more interpretations of race, class, and gender, as well as the emergence of regionalism, and the field of borderlands history.

¹⁰ This project of erosion has gone almost completely unstudied outside indigenous spaces and relationships. While these are necessary aspects of settler society that must be examined, to ignore the other spaces and relationships whose development is constrained by the sedimentation of colonial legacies that exists in every facet of society, is to absolve settler colonialism for many social ills that it has created and perpetuated.

I bring up Limerick and her use of “legacy” here not only to recognize the great leaps made in the past, but also to suggest that perhaps “legacy” does not go far enough. Where Limerick argued that we should seek to understand the West as a place made and remade by the violent conquest of Native peoples, and that the legacy of that conquest continues to inform the development of the region, settler colonial historians argue that all this is valid, but it is not the *legacy* of conquest with which we now contend, but the ongoing reality of it. The violence never ended, it merely changed form, became more subtle and more focused. Colonial and settler colonial scholars have turned away from terms like legacy precisely because it can suggest that colonialisms are past, and we now only deal with post-colonialisms, a term that has itself gone out of fashion in many academic circles relatively recently. Instead, many scholars have turned to terms like *afterlife* as a more active form of legacy and one more reflective on the ongoing nature of things that are often difficult to perceive. In many ways, this etymological discussion circles back to erosion and sedimentation that so often go completely unnoticed.

This study is concerned as much with the immaterial aspect of sedimentation as it is with the material, precisely because so few physical markers of the settler colonial project, and its inherent violence, remain.¹¹ Rather, I am interested in the ways that the

¹¹There are an expanding number of studies on settler colonialism in the American West. While they do not often or sufficiently address non-white/indigenous histories, they nevertheless provide the foundation for conceptualizing how other groups fit into the settler project. For a sample of studies on US Colonial expansion and Indigenous peoples, see, Jeffery Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2004). For Indigenous studies perspective, see, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014). For a study of western genocide, see, Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). For a comparative study of settler colonial legal structures, see, Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007). For a study of gender and the family, see, Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother*

racial categories, forming in conjunction with the settler colonial project and its structure of racism, sediment around us, informing the ways we think, act, and even construct a sense of place and self as westerners. Through this lens, a new perspective of the creation of the western structure of racial exclusion, the social and cultural erosion that targeted the black community, and the ways this process fits into our broader understanding of western historical studies, comes into focus. At its core, excavating the sedimentary layers of colonial settlement and anti-black racism represents a methodological process enabling the historian to interrogate the African American experience in the West. That investigation, in turn, will necessarily challenge and critique our narrow conceptualizations of the nature of imperial formations, and even reconsider what constitutes a colonial archive.

Stalled and Forgetful Histories

Historian Quintard Taylor noted that black westerners were twice forgotten by history. They were forgotten because the black community was largely urban. Though the West was in fact one of the most urban regions of the country, it was not perceived as such. They were forgotten again because they were not white. Similarly, while Western cities were among the most diverse places in America in the late nineteenth century, the myth of the hardy Anglo-Saxon settler dominated the nation's imagination of who occupied the vast grasslands, deserts, forests, and mountains of the "frontier." Black history in the West continues to face many of the same challenges that Taylor understood

in 1998.¹² In many ways, regional African American history has stalled on what Richard White and Lawrence de Graaf called the “contribution school.” It has been seen as novel, as unique, as interesting, but not necessarily as *western*. In these landscapes, scoured by the settler project and buried deep in the sediments of racial and colonial legacies, the West merely functions as a new setting for African American history to take place, remaining disengaged from the larger western narrative.

Studying erased communities remains a shortcoming in black western studies well after scholars answered White’s and De Graaf’s critiques in the late 1980s. In 1998, Taylor responded with his book, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*. It built on the early studies of African American-specific history in the West such as Nell Painter’s *Exodusters* (1976) and Lawrence de Graaf’s work on African American women.¹³ Taylor, unlike the more narrowly focused studies of previous scholars, ambitiously presented a regional history of African Americans from 1528-1990.¹⁴ Most, if not all histories of black western communities, be it Taylor’s studies of Seattle and Portland, Broussard’s work on San Francisco, or Robert O. Self’s study of Oakland all highlight the degree to which existing black communities dominate the scholarship very much to the detriment of erased communities. This trend in western black historiography could be

¹² Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

¹³ Lawrence de Graaf, “Race, Sex, and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920.” *Pacific Historical Review* 49:1 (February 1980), 285-314.

¹⁴ *In Search of the Racial Frontier* remains a foundational piece of scholarship for its focused commitment to presenting the experiences of African Americans in the West. The scope of Taylor’s study, however, did not provide for close considerations in many parts of the country. His approach to western black history as primarily an urban study continued to inspire numerous scholars to explore various local African American histories.¹⁴ Likewise, Albert Broussard focused his survey, *Expectations of Equality: A History of Black Westerners* (2012), on the foundation of black western identity in the 19th century as it influenced the struggle for civil rights from WWII onward. However, much of the region is neglected for the rich stories of places like Texas, California, and Kansas.

mediated by ruminating on colonial logics of settlement and anti-blackness. Further, the process of colonial erosion that sought to destabilize, dismantle, and eventually displace African American populations inextricably binds black history to narratives of western community and state formation.

Finally, we should also recognize that black westerners have been forgotten a third time; in the preponderance of scholarship on settler colonial societies. Perhaps forgotten is not quite correct. The absence of African Americans (post-emancipation), Latino, and Asian communities has inevitably led to the settler colonial model often appearing too inadequate or a hopeless binary that cannot account for the region's varying experiences. However, a settler colonial reading of the regionally distinct form of racism—as it acted against the black community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—offers the field both a necessary critique and a way forward. The concept of a colonial racism specific to the western United States is rooted in studies of whiteness, imperial power, and the logic of settlement in state formation.¹⁵ As such, a study of western racism and the black community must therefore be in conversation with settler colonialism—both archivally and epistemologically. Thus far, settler colonial narratives have focused so deeply on the point of appropriation that one of Patrick Wolfe's most salient arguments has gone understudied; that settler colonialism is not an event, but a

¹⁵ For studies of whiteness see Jason Pierce, *Making the White Man's West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2016); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010); W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

structure.¹⁶ The ongoing nature of settler colonialism should not be confined only to events and processes of Indigenous/white interaction. Instead, the reality of western racism and the history of black westerners should be viewed as a predictable extrapolation of the settler colonial narrative.

Colonial erosion and sedimentation offers the possibility for the reconciliation of black studies and indigenous/settler colonial studies as well. Historian Justin Leroy acutely phrased the impasse between the two as each field reducing “the other to a variation on the theme of liberal multiculturalism in order to maintain the integrity of its own exceptional claim.”¹⁷ These claims can be reduced down to which form of violence, appropriation or slavery, is the historic structure that most informs the inherent violence of modernity. As such, the usefulness of settler colonialism to black studies requires the primacy of the logic of enslavement within that conceptual framework, and conversely, Indigenous/settler colonial studies demand that slavery be a secondary consideration to the logic of settlement. Leroy, I think, rightfully argues that neither theory alone can account for the variations and messiness of the archive while maintaining such disciplinary exceptionalism. Instead, he suggests that the expansion of the US and other settler states relies upon both “anti-blackness and a logic of settlement.”¹⁸

In naming this impasse, as well as offering examples of how to incorporate the two theories, Leroy and others already have made use of erosion and sedimentation. Colonial violence is erosive. Appropriation erodes Indigenous sovereignty while anti-

¹⁶ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4 (December, 2006), 387.

¹⁷ Justin Leroy, “Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism,” *Theory and Event* 19:4 (2016), 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

blackness erodes self-possession.¹⁹ Both forms of violence erode the body, and neither is concerned by which process underlies the other. The present study not only suggests that we turn our gaze upon the process of erosion in historical studies of the American West, but also that equal attention must be paid to impacts of colonial sedimentation whether it be in the twentieth century or the present. Leroy argues for present analysis of Palestine and the ongoing settler project there to be read through “[t]he sedimented histories of settler colonialism, US imperialism, white supremacy, and anti-blackness.”²⁰ This meditation on sedimented legacies of settlement and anti-blackness provides a much needed theoretical flexibility not just for studies of slavery and settler colonialism, but for the history of black westerners and the American West as well. As Leroy argues, it allows us to conceptualize settler colonial processes in places that may “lack a clear indigenous population or a history of slavery,” and “account for the particular history of blackness within settler societies.”²¹

Historians who are aware of these colonial formations can better reveal and articulate the history of lives and landscapes that have been washed away and buried beneath legacies organized by more than a century of violence, appropriation, and complicity. It was the objective of western structures of colonial racism to destabilize, dismantle, and eventually displace African American populations from much of the West. White and black westerners alike interacted with, struggled against, and sometimes perpetuated this structure. Race relations taking place at such a foundational level thus

¹⁹ Ibid., 6-7.

²⁰ Ibid., 9.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

makes the experiences of African Americans as central to our understanding of the West as they are to the South.

Constructing Racial Categories of Exclusion in the West

This thesis posits that the period from roughly 1880 through the end of the 1930s and beginning of World War II represented a distinct moment in the settler colonial project. This moment followed what I call elsewhere the bleeding edge of settlement, in which violence and murder were widely accepted methods for white settlers and the state to carry out the logic of elimination. In the West the early stages of colonial engagement largely gave way to more nuanced and subtle forms of violence over time. This moment is made more complex by both its regional setting and by nature of it occurring after emancipation and the sabotage of Reconstruction in the South. The Reconstruction Amendments (1865, 1868, 1870) provided former slaves their first (thin) cover of federal protection and membership within the Nation, rights that were as of yet not offered to Native Americans, Asian peoples, and many Latino Americans as well.²² Still, for African Americans living in the South, their new rights and freedoms were under constant assault from those seeking to uphold white supremacy, as well as from the visceral memory of violence that was imbued in the very soil of Dixie. For such reasons, the trajectory of the settler colonial project in the American West departed markedly from the project ongoing in the South. The racial regimes that settler colonialism continuously

²² Native Americans were not recognized as US citizens until 1924. Chinese residents in the United States became eligible for naturalization in 1943, Filipino and Asian Indian naturalization passed in 1946, and not until the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952 could Japanese residents become naturalized as citizens. All Asian groups faced exclusion in immigration policy until 1965.

produce, as Patrick Wolfe argues, draws upon these divergent histories and thus create different categories of racial exclusion.²³ Following that these racial regimes produce different forms of erosion, the patterns of colonial sediments that occlude black history in Montana and the West also differ from the colonial sediments of other regions.

The laws, constitutions, ordinances, and newspapers in the West speak frequently to the developing perception among Euro-American settlers that the region could be established as the locus of whiteness—even to the exclusion and removal of blacks, Natives, Asians, and Latinos. As early as 1857, Oregon state legislators wrote an exclusion clause into its first constitution forbidding free blacks from settling in the new state.²⁴ In 1893, the town of Liberty, Oregon resolved that “all black people leave town.”²⁵ In her book, *Legacy of Conquest*, Patricia Limerick also notes that similar resolutions are “scattered throughout the historical record.”²⁶ California, in which Hispanic style *rancheros* prospered for decades using unfree Indian labor, quickly turned an about face after 1846. Eschewing free laborers for a track of genocidal erasure, a racially homogenous vision for the future became more widely accepted.²⁷ San Francisco’s major newspaper, the *Californian*, openly proclaimed on March 15, 1848, that “We desire only a white population in California, even the Indians amongst us, as far as we have seen, are more of a nuisance than a benefit to the country; we would like to

²³ Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016), 3, 18.

²⁴ This statute remained officially in place until 1926. Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 278.

²⁵ Elizabeth McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940* (Portland: Gregorian Press, 1980), 79.

²⁶ Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 280.

²⁷ Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016), 42-66.

get rid of them.”²⁸ It was here, in a region of newfangled ethnic complexity, that blacks were racialized in new ways, and within new structures.

The colonial construction of racial categories in the West differed from other regions in part because the process of settlement required an initial labor force much larger than the number of available white settlers. In turn, racialized labor systems and widespread exploitation accompanied fear and anxiety about the West’s unprecedented ethnic diversity. Whites seeking the fabled wealth and opportunity of the West were threatened by the role of Chinese immigrants in emerging labor markets of the Pacific coast, extending into the interior by way of the railroad. The racialization of the Chinese as a threat to the wages of lower class whites is well documented.²⁹ Because of this, Chinese and black civil rights were intrinsically linked. Afraid that extending social and civil liberties to the newly freed blacks might set a precedent for Asians, Mexicans, and Native Americans, many western states employed similar racial models on African Americans. California and Oregon did not ratify the 15th Amendment until the mid-twentieth century.³⁰

This evolving structure sought to prevent blacks from entering certain middle-class occupations or from enjoying the security of unionized workforces. The fear that white, working-class westerners might lose their higher paying jobs to African Americans, or that their presence alone in the workforce might drive down wages was not

²⁸ *The Californian*, March 15, 1842, 2.

²⁹ For studies of the Chinese exclusion in the American West, see, Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacies: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Secret War Against Chinese Americans*, (New York: Random House, 2007); Christopher W. Merritt, *The Coming Man from Canton: Chinese Experience in Montana, 1862-1943*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017).

³⁰ Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 280.

unfounded. Railroads across the West from time to time chose to break strikes by bringing on thousands of black laborers to continue the work. Even more potent for whites were times in which black soldiers arrived to put down labor conflicts. Organizers of the Western Federation of Miners in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1899 were met with six companies of the twenty-fourth U.S. Colored infantry, commonly known as the Buffalo Soldiers, who arrived to enforce martial law in response to a violent, ongoing strike.³¹ Though the black men arriving in the area were not there to take their jobs, whites nevertheless solidified the connection between the exclusion of blacks and their opportunity and access to work.

Studying Montana's Colonial Sedimentation

Under colonial construction of racial categories, African Americans in the West struggled with very different forms of prejudice than they had previously been subjected to in the South. In the environs of 1890s Montana, for instance, African Americans could expect to vote with little trouble, and in some cases, run for office.³² Both Republicans and Democrats courted the black vote at times, representing the starkest difference between the West and the South on such issues. With only a few cases of violence between whites and blacks at the polls, we see a clear sign that certain levels of civic engagement were not pressing issues for westerners. By the late nineteenth century, owning property likewise seemed to have been met with far less resistance than in other

³¹ Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 187-189.

³² That exception was the Helena Election Riots of 1867, where officials sought to experiment with black suffrage. It led to the murder of Sammy Hayes, a black man who tried to exercise his right to vote. For this account see J.W. Smurr, "Jim Crow out West," in *Historical Essays on Montana and the Northwest*, J.W. Smurr and K. Ross Toole, eds., (Helena: The Western Press, 1957), 161-162.

geographic regions. In fact, very few places in the intermountain West saw forcibly segregated neighborhoods, often producing more than one black neighborhood in a city. The most southern form of racism present in Montana could be seen in the refusal of services to blacks in restaurants or other businesses. While this was certainly demeaning, such forms of racism did not have the targeted effect that the broader, western structure carried.³³ Moreover, western racism was not primarily concerned with these kinds of interactions.

In nineteenth and twentieth century Montana, the goal was never to establish a color line as it existed elsewhere. Demarcating white and black spaces such as in the South and eventually in the urban North implied the acceptance of at least adjacent habitation of the races. The settler colonial west, in its construction of racial categories and the role of blacks in the region, granted no such acceptance.³⁴ Other measures would be taken to similarly deconstruct those black communities, with varying degrees of success. During the decades immediately following the turn of the century, however, we can track the establishment of the settler structure of racial exclusion. Instead of creating

³³ Students of Western and Montana history may recall the famous case of William Woodcock, a black servant to a U.S. Marshall who entered a restaurant in Butte, 1881. Being asked to leave (or possibly sit elsewhere), Woodcock sued for damages under the Civil Rights Act of 1875. The case was heard in December, 1883; the result was a landmark moment in Montana's and the nation's history. He won his case, receiving five hundred dollars in damages. The decision stood as it was not appealed to the Territorial Supreme Court, or beyond to the U.S. Supreme court. For this reason, the small case was not used as widespread precedent. However, the refusal to serve people of color returned vigorously in the 20th century in some places in Montana. For more see J.W. Smurr, "Jim Crow out West," in *Historical Essays on Montana and the Northwest*, J.W. Smurr and K. Ross Toole, eds., (Helena: The Western Press, 1957), 175-176.

³⁴ The notable exceptions to this in Montana were the cities of Great Falls and Billings. Both cities saw a variety of factors contribute to the growth of a single, geographic African American neighborhood. Great Falls was one of those cities in the region that enforced segregated zoning ordinances. Both cities unintentionally contributed to the unification and solidarity of the black community, making it more vibrant, self-reliant, and established. By the 1930s, when the seven other black urban centers in Montana had lost thirty percent of their populations, Great Falls and Billings had not.

“separate” black spaces, the settler state sought to dismantle them entirely, primarily in areas of strong community place identity.

Montana represents an ideal case study of the intermountain West for various reasons. Its vast and diverse landscapes allow an examination of black history in the environments of cities and towns that drew their livelihoods from mining, logging, agriculture, ranching, government, and the railroad. Few other states in the region offer perspectives into such an array of black western history. Montana also provides the quintessential settler colonial narrative in the West for African Americans. Its black population was once a fixture in its early settler society. Hundreds of African Americans lived and worked in every major city as visible members of those communities around the turn of the century. However, by the close of World War II, the black community had been all but erased.



The following chapters present the history of Black Montana within the theoretical framework of settler colonial erosion and sedimentation. Methodologically, though it is not often stated, the markers of imperial formations are present in the process of research, as nearly all sources are drawn from a form of the colonial archive. Its contents are arranged thematically, rather than chronologically. Each theme deals with what is traditionally called the “agency” of black Montanans. From a structural perspective, agency, especially that of minority groups, is often cast as reactionary to the hegemonic order. I think, however, that western settler colonialism and the agency of the black community do not fit so neatly into the active hegemony/passive oppressed paradigm. Particularly after Emancipation and Reconstruction offered nominal state

protection to black Americans by 1870, the vision of the settler West in this new moment had no place for communities of color. In this reading of agency, then, it becomes the settler society that is usually the reactive actor responding to a black community forging ahead, of their own volition, in search of new possibilities, security, and a home.

Chapter 1 begins with the origins of black settlers in Montana. *The Invisible Migration* presents the ways and means in which black Americans came to Montana. Moreover, it also attends to the dichotomy between their arrival in the context of settler colonialism as refugees from the horrors of Jim Crow, and as settlers, appropriating the land of Native Americans, even by means of violence and genocide. Chapter 1 thus sets the stage for a deeper dive into the incongruent relationship between black settlers and the settler colonial society that aspired to whiteness.

Chapter 2 highlights the ideological and political milieu from which the black community emerged in Montana around the turn of the century. Though nearly all Montana “race” men and women outwardly championed the ideology of Booker T. Washington, the realities of colonial erosion within their own localities led western African Americans to eschew Washington’s more accommodational policies. Instead, they fervently agitated in local, state, and national political spheres. This hybrid ideology and the circumstances that gave rise to it are presented in *The Washingtonian West*. This history is preserved in print in the pages of Montana’s two black newspapers, whose editors gave voice to their community on an array of issues. Despite their attempt to carve out a political niche for western black politics, logics of settlement engrained within the white society at large directly acted against their interests.

Chapter 3 leaves the fraternal halls and political meetings to examine black history out under the Big Sky. *Thinking with Magpies* examines how the views held by conservationists in the early twentieth century in Montana and across the nation were undeniably colored by racialized understandings of the body, the environment, the “nation,” and who their movement was intended to benefit. In Montana, a clear logic of settlement proliferated conservationist approaches about which resources should be preserved and why. The magpie in the early 1900s was both a material example of a native species slotted for removal by conservationists, as well as a serendipitous analogy for the how whites conceived of the relationship between blacks and the environment. However, the actual black environmental experience thoroughly subverts those misconceptions. Though black Montanans in many cases pioneered the region’s first outdoor exploits and continued to maintain and foster the black wilderness ethic well into the twentieth century, their exclusion from our cultural memory of that aspect of Montana’s past is testament to the effectiveness of colonial erosion.

Moving from larger social systems like migration and ideological politics or from the issues surrounding the natural environment of Montana, chapter 4 delves into the effects of colonial erosion on the family and gendered experiences of black Montanans. Scholarship on gender and race within a settler colonial society speak to the intrinsic relationship between colonial systems of power, race, and sexuality. Ann Laura Stoler asserts in her work, *Race and the Education of Desire*, that, insofar as colonial states are by their nature racial, then the issue of interracial sex and sexuality between both colonizers and colonized is the central concern of those structures. This certainly rings

true in the settler state of Montana. The 1909 prohibition of interracial marriages is of specific interest. Its implications are often not straightforward, and require a great deal of interrogation. *Legislating Colonial Erosion* illustrates that the politics and public sentiments of racial sexuality in Montana were regionally contingent upon the absence of a “southern” color line and based on the regional goals of the settler society. Historian Tiya Miles argues that interracial relationships might not fall solely within the framework of analysis associated with the sexual violence born of the exploitation of slavery. Moreover, I argue that the agency which Miles and other scholars find in the lives of black men and women within interracial relationships is representative of African Americans exerting their freedoms within the settler society, and paradoxically becoming subject to the systems and structures of erosion that would seek to remove them entirely.

The fifth and final chapter of *The Erosion of the Racial Frontier* dissects the empirical data and narrative arc showing the out-migration of nearly half Montana’s black residents. Thematically, chapter 5 draws statistical conclusions from the variety of factors, both economic and social, that led to the erasure of the black community. Within the general societal framework of Montana in the early twentieth century, the erosion which this thesis presents led to a high degree of vulnerability for African Americans. In many ways, the crash of the homesteading boom in the early 1920s began a host of reactions that effectively led to the whitening of the West. *History among the Sediments* culminates the present study by calling upon scholars to consider the entanglements of race and region, and thus how colonial formations played out in the history of Montana.

A century since the zenith of the African American community in Montana, historians still struggle to articulate its genesis, establishment, and exclusion as a distinctly western narrative. That, in its own nuanced sense, is a form of colonial occlusion that remains in force even today. By consigning all white and black race relations to a southern paradigm of prejudice, we restrict our ability to contextualize the unique western experience of African Americans. Likewise, by limiting all settler colonial analysis to finite points of white/Indigenous interaction, we lose the ability to conceive of other non-white, non-native peoples and their experiences within a settler colonial environment. In doing so, the connections between the historical characteristics of the West and its marginalized and underrepresented communities become difficult to see. This constitutes a central theme of settler societies in the American West and elsewhere. It represents the ongoing, structural nature of settler colonialism, but it is not confined by a hopelessly rigid white/indigenous binary.

Focusing on colonial erosion and sedimentation contends with another stalled history. What is the place of African Americans in the West? Taking an interdisciplinary lead from colonial studies may present the western historian a new lens through which to view race and its many ongoing consequences in the region. The detritus formed by colonialism may not be obvious in every source or story. Nevertheless, much of the intermountain West is subject to its many layers of sedimentation. The whitening of the West was not an event, it was a constructed goal. In many places, that goal was achieved by creating a society that undermined the right and ability for African Americans to call a neighborhood, city, or state home. The evidence of this history can be found in every

western town that has few or no black residents, and continues to be unaware that there ever were any. It can be found in the rejected union cards, marriage licenses, and business permits that prevented the growth, prosperity, and security of a community. And it is reflected in an 1892 map of Helena, showing just how effectively racist structures can erode cultural heritage, condemning it to obscurity and erasure.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INVISIBLE MIGRATION:

BLACK SETTLERS TO MONTANA, 1880-1917

Post emancipation settlement of Montana by African Americans began in the social milieu of Reconstruction's implementation and sabotage. The failure to secure the basic liberties of Southern blacks and to ensure their unencumbered civic engagement began what would be nearly a century of out migration that would not slow until the 1960s. Of the millions of African Americans who would leave the South, several thousand made their way to the territory, and eventually the state, of Montana. Women and men like Elizabeth Williams, a business owner and real-estate speculator, Jefferson Harrison, a twenty-seven year veteran of the 24th U.S. Colored Infantry, and Walker Browning, an orphan, refugee, gold miner, railroad worker, and early explorer of Yellowstone National Park, along with thousands of other black Americans came to the West in search of the liberties and freedom denied to them in the South and increasingly in the urban north. In doing so, however, black settlers would take part in a colonial project that would come to be a defining theme in the experiences of black communities in Montana, and across the American West.

The white settler society of the American West first sought to remove the Native peoples from the land and drive them to the point of total erasure. Yet this brand of colonialism was not limited to any series of genocidal events. Instead, land appropriation and the elimination of the Native was merely the bleeding edge of the ensuing settler

colonial society.³⁵ The structure that was established on the homeland of the American Indian continues long after the memory of its bloody origins fades from the collective consciousness of the region's Euro-American settlers. Montana covers over 94 million acres of the American West. At the time of the last official battle between the U.S. cavalry and Native Americans at Pine Ridge, it constituted one of the most ethnically diverse states in the Union.³⁶ After the implementation of a settler society in Montana, those same social forces contended to establish a state of whiteness.

The movement to establish and build a society in the American West that would exist as a locus of whiteness inadvertently facilitated an invisible migration of thousands of African Americans. Critical race theorist David Goldberg argues that settler states aspire to whiteness.³⁷ Yet the practical nature of this aspiration in the case of Montana was undermined by the very fact that settlement could only be achieved with the assistance and labor of various communities of color. The promise of ample land had sent newly freed black Southerners to the state seeking to start their lives anew. The push to continue the removal of Native peoples brought thousands of black soldiers to Montana

³⁵ As the introduction to this thesis argues, Patrick Wolfe, like Roediger, only considers African Americans as the foil against which to measure the complexities of Native/white interactions. Yet Wolfe's description of the role of genocide in the appropriation of Native lands leaves more than ample room for a reconsideration of blacks in settler colonial expansion. See Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4 (December, 2006) 386-388.

³⁶ For Statistics on census records, populations, and ethnic demographics see, Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf.

³⁷ In *The Wages of Whiteness*, David Roediger provides a succinct, compelling explanation of the settler colonial model. "After the failure of early attempts to 'reduce the savages to civility' by enslaving them, it became clear that the drama of the white-Indian contact outside the fur trade would turn on land and conquest, not on labor." (22) Likewise, critical race theorist David Theo Goldberg conceived of settler states as such: "Racially conceived states are invariably molded in the image of whiteness, to reflect the interest of whites." (162) See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 21-22; David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 162.

between 1888 and 1907. The design to establish shipping and travel lines up the Missouri River and to extend railroads across the continent in the name of supplying and supporting the settler society relied on hundreds and thousands of black laborers and their families, many of whom made Montana their home.

To understand the West as a settler colonial space, we must be willing to consider race and race relations a central theme in its history. This chapter analyzes the migration of thousands of black Americans to Montana as a function of settler colonial expansion. *The Invisible Migration* challenges both the traditional vision of westward expansion as one typified by peaceful white pioneers conquering an immense and untenable natural world, as well as the idea that African Americans played no part in the horrors visited upon Native peoples by Euro-Americans. Black westward expansion is fraught with paradoxes. It is a history that suggests African Americans actively fled oppression, exploitation, and death, only to bolster a society in the West that inflicted many of the same terrors on Native Americans. *The Invisible Migration* is a necessary and challenging chapter of the past that presents the origins of African Americans in Montana, and thus sets the stage for a study of the colonial erosion and sedimentation that epitomizes the ongoing nature of a settler colonial society.

This historical analysis, which places black westward expansion within a societal framework which aspires to whiteness—to the exclusion of those African Americans who themselves participated in the colonial structure—must also be weighed against the agency of black Montanans as well. Certainly black settlers were not merely pawns in an expansive colonial project. African Americans seeking relief from the injustices of a

broken nation joined the military, claimed homesteads, boarded trains and steamboats all to assert their freedom of movement and destiny. Diasporic narratives in black history harken back to the ultimate assertion of one's liberty, escape from bondage. The complexity of black westward expansion in a settler colonial model must not ignore these realities. Instead, the Invisible Migration is testament to the convolution which bound individuals and their agency to the objectives of elimination and colonial erosion that define a settler social structure.³⁸



The Invisible Migration, which refers to the movement of African Americans to Montana during the decades around the turn of the century, settles into the historiography of the black community and diaspora in a way that fills a sizable gap in the scholarship of the field. Studies on the Great Migration consider the end of Reconstruction in the late 1870s and the intensification of Jim Crow as the main causes of the migrations to Northern cities in the 1910s and 1920s. Other histories, such as Nell Irvin Painter's *Exodusters* (1976), examine other movements and their roots before the Great Migration.³⁹ Ira Berlin's work, *The Making of African America*, also constructs a new framework for how we should understand the movement of African Americans by examining four great migrations, beginning with the middle passage and ending with

³⁸ Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura argue that Japanese settlers in Hawaii entered the white power structure, appropriated Hawaiian's land, and thus became settler colonists within the larger U.S. settler society. Though seemingly similar to African Americans as settlers, Asian settlers continued to appropriate and profit off indigenous land, and thus conformed to the state of "whiteness" in ways that the overwhelming majority of black westerners never could. See Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, eds., *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

³⁹ Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*, (New York: Knopf, 1977).

African immigration after the 1965 Immigration bill that coincided with the Civil Rights Act.⁴⁰ Such works illustrate that black diasporas be understood through the Great Migration alone. Likewise, historian James Gregory argues that the movement of the Great Migration should itself be understood within a dualistic perception of both black and white social developments. He argues this effectively in his book *The Southern Diaspora*, where he examines white migration out of the South in addition to the millions of African Americans who left.⁴¹

However, these studies do not address the movement of African Americans to the West prior to 1915. This chapter places the Invisible Migration to Montana within the scholarship on race and migration in America, and examines how that movement represented the genesis of a distinctly western narrative of African American history. The historical narrative of black diaspora emphasizes how such movements are manifestations of both the oppression of the places being fled, and the hope that emanated from these new promised lands. The North during slavery, Kansas and Oklahoma during the Exoduster migration, Africa during Reconstruction and the early years of Jim Crow all represented the hope of freedom against the backdrop of Southern atrocities.⁴² The American West, however, is seldom considered alongside these other “promised” lands. Yet for nearly half a century, southern blacks slipped away from the long arm of the South, and away from the narrow gaze of the nation that had argued, discussed and

⁴⁰ Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*, (New York: Viking, 2010).

⁴¹ James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁴² See “A Great, Grand, and All Important Question: African American Emigration to Liberia,” in Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 16-50.

postulated the rise or fall of the race in places like New York, Mississippi, and Liberia, and sought a better life for themselves beneath the Big Sky of Montana.

Likewise, in the scholarship of settler colonial expansion, African Americans have been all but completely disregarded. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz is among the only scholars who place black military men at the fore of indigenous land appropriation and genocide. Even so, in her book, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (2014), Dunbar-Ortiz recognizes the role of the Buffalo Soldiers only insofar as they were used by the white, settler state to dispossess the land of native peoples.⁴³ Relegation of the Buffalo Soldiers to non-agents in this narrative deprives them first of their active struggle to seek employment, self-betterment, and freedom from their prior circumstances. Further, such characterizations lead to black soldiers being absolved of their participation in the erasing campaign against the American Indian in the nineteenth century. Beyond overt participation in settler expansion, such as the Buffalo Soldiers, very little has been made of the latent role black settlers had in the settler colonial framework. The Invisible Migration speaks to that historiographical shortcoming.



From a purely quantitative perspective, the Invisible Migration can appear underwhelming. In 1880, the Territory of Montana was home to only 346 African Americans. By 1890, the black population had risen to 1,490 individuals. It peaked at nearly two thousand black residents in 1910, nearly all of whom were born in other parts of the United States, primarily the South. Considering the overall population of Montana

⁴³ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 146.

was 376,000 in 1910, it may well seem that the black population was inconsequential or invisible. This conclusion would be incorrect for a number of reasons. Montana's population was overwhelmingly rural around the turn of the century, before the crash of the Homesteading boom. The rural population was, however, almost entirely white. The black community with only a handful of outliers and individuals lived exclusively in eight or nine cities and towns. Even Montana's larger cities of over ten thousand people in 1910 had a much larger percentage of black residents than what was represented by the state census reports. Anaconda, Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula were all home to a black community of 100-400 African Americans between 1890 and 1920.⁴⁴ The establishment of these communities came about in various ways. Each cause of black westward expansion to Montana—whether it was mining, military, railroad, or other economic opportunities—can be understood both as a means of black self-determination and an agent of settler colonialism.

The Golden West

The participation of black settlers in the appropriation of native lands and the establishment of a settler colonial society in Montana and the West is reinforced by several key factors. Most significantly, African American settlers understood the West to be as much their entitlement as it was for Euro-Americans, at least initially. Montana and the western settler society, though functionally still aspiring to whiteness, attracted many

⁴⁴ For Statistics on census records, populations, and ethnic demographics see, Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf.

African Americans. Ed Simms came to Fort Benton as a steamboat hand before de-shipping at the very end of the westward Missouri River line in 1883. He made his way to the famed Great Falls of the Missouri and its namesake city. Simms found the new town of Great Falls so inviting he wrote several co-workers who labored on the docks and shipping lines as far away as Georgia of the opportunities that the territorial town had to offer African Americans. Several families and friends took Simms seriously, and by 1887, more than a dozen black men and women began life in the city after it was connected to the East via the Northern Pacific Railroad.⁴⁵ By 1890, the black community of Great Falls organized the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in the new state of Montana, called Union Bethel. This cemented Great Falls as an ongoing place of opportunity for African Americans for the next fifty years. As a result, its black population grew to over three hundred by 1920.⁴⁶ Men like Simms and those who followed him west were capable of making the migration, and did so for any number of personal reasons. Nevertheless, their overall movement represents larger trends of Southern blacks opting out of the serf-like, agrarian life, and taking on the popular mantle of pioneer, or settler.

More than just a place free from the physical and psychological memory of slavery (as the South was for so many), the West promised or seemed to promise a solution to many societal questions faced by southern blacks. The promise of equitable

⁴⁵ William Knott, interview by Quintard Taylor, "Mr. William Knott." April 2, 1974. Spokane, Wash: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002. For more on Great Falls' African American History, see Kenneth Robison. "Early Black American Settlers, Great Falls, MT." Historical Black Americans in Northern Montana, May 2, 2009, accessed July 9, 2015, online at <http://blackamericansmt.blogspot.com/2009/05/early-black-american-settlers-great.html>.

⁴⁶ Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Register Nomination Form. Montana State Historic Preservation Office, 2003. Sec. 8, Page 2.

communities and property ownership continued to attract African Americans from the South until Montana's crippling drought and depression that began in 1917. African American newspapers from cities like Topeka and Kansas City lauded black communities in the West. The *Kansas City Sun* published a series of pieces entitled *The Golden West*. Over a dozen editions of the column detailed the travels of an African Methodist Episcopal bishop to a different western city each week, including four in Montana. The column praised the character of individuals from each city he visited and commented on the financial and social success of each community. The sub-heading of the column speaks to the underlying tone of the author. "AN INTERESTING REVIEW OF THE PEOPLE, TOWNS AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE GREAT WESTERN SECTION OF OUR COUNTRY... The Colored Americans Making Good in the Far West and a Steady Stream of Desirable Immigration Now Pouring Into That Splendid Country With Its Wonderful Possibilities."⁴⁷

Even before the "Golden West" was penned for an African American audience, black men and women knew of the promise that Montana held. Often these individuals, such as Ed Simms of Great Falls, were the instigators of what would become steady migration and vibrant communities. Billings' black community owes much of its longevity to a man named Walker Browning. After his father died during the Civil War and his mother soon after that, teenager Walker Browning was left to care for two infant siblings in the city of Paris, Missouri. In 1872, he moved his family, who were still quite young, to Omaha, where he met and married the young Ruth Merriweather. The next year, he continued to move his family west, to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Walker, as a

⁴⁷ *The Kansas City Sun*, February 26, 1916. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

cook, joined a government survey preceding the opening of Yellowstone National Park. Following the conclusion of the historic survey of America's first National Park, the Browning family moved to Deadwood, South Dakota where Walker tried his hand at gold mining for several years. After the gold rush in Deadwood subsided in 1880, Browning moved west again to Billings, a burgeoning railroad town. After working for two years, the Brownings built their home amongst the labor encampment on the Southside of the railroad in 1883. It was around the Browning residence and Walker's magnanimous personality that the black community of Billings grew in the 1880s and 1890s.⁴⁸

Black Montanans played a decisive role in the creation of a viable society in the West even before the presence of a sizable black community. Likely born a slave in Kentucky, Elizabeth Williams came to Montana Territory shortly after Emancipation. A shrewd businesswoman and entrepreneur, Williams came to fill one of the most important roles in fledging Montana communities. Lizzie Williams came to Bozeman in 1870, at a time when the success of this Cowtown and stop along the Bozeman trail to the gold fields of Virginia City was anything but certain. The lifeblood of many Montana towns, the railroad, would not reach the Gallatin Valley until 1883. Until that point, when much needed resources and products could be affordably transferred across the vast prairies to the inhospitable Rockies, towns like Bozeman needed courageous investors to ensure its survival.⁴⁹ Together with another black Haitian-born businessman, Samuel

⁴⁸ "Walker Browning Obituary" *Billings Gazette*, Feb 8, 1925. Accessed at ancestry.com.

⁴⁹ Historian Crystal Alegria made a deep archival dive to uncover the life of Elizabeth Williams in Bozeman, Montana. Among her pointed analysis of Williams, was the postulation that black women and men who fled the South before or after Reconstruction might best be characterized as refugees, not settlers or pioneers. Nevertheless, William's life in Montana after finding refuge continued to be marked by the structures and means of appropriation of a settler society. Crystal Alegria, "The Last Will and Testament of

Lewis, Lizzie Williams speculated in commercial property and real-estate in the early 1870s. Capital investment in homes and businesses as provided by Williams and Lewis was similar to that of white magnates like Nelson Story, Leander Black, and other famed pioneers of early Bozeman. The small black community of Bozeman developed only after Williams and Lewis had died. Thus the contribution of Bozeman's earliest and most successful black residents benefited the white community at large, a community which largely forgot them. The streets, buildings, and city parks of Bozeman now bear the names of Story, Black, Cooper, Beall, and Lamme, but not these men's contemporaries such as Elizabeth Williams or Samuel Lewis.⁵⁰

The Buffalo Soldier Era

The Golden West that attracted both steamboat porters like Ed Simms and railroad workers like Walker Browning became a viable settler society in part because of the participation, and in the case of Elizabeth Williams, the capital investment of African Americans. Yet many black men came to Montana not as civilian-settlers, but as soldiers. In 1888 a young black man with an easy going name from Tennessee signed enlistment papers for service in the 25th US Colored Infantry.⁵¹ The military took Lee Pleasant

Lizzie Williams: An African American Entrepreneur in 1870s Bozeman," *The Extreme History Project Lecture Series*, given at the Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, MT, on February 16, 2017.

⁵⁰ Samuel Lewis House, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Montana Historical Society, 1999. Prepared by B. Derek Strahn.

⁵¹ Born Lewiston, Tennessee, 1865, Lee Pleasant Driver grew up a lover of music and education. In his early twenties, he chose to pursue both by attending Fisk College, near Nashville. Though he never completed his degree, he was enrolled at Fisk for several semesters, teaching at a black school while attending to his own studies. During his last year there, 1888, he likely shared classes with one of the great emerging thinkers of his day, W. E. B. Du Bois. Fisk College itself would later be under direction of another great social thinker for the black community, Booker T. Washington. *For Driver's birth*, U.S. Census, 1880 (District 1, Marshall, Tennessee; Roll: 1269; Family History Film: 1255269; Page: 310C; Enumeration District: 132). *Family History*, "Lee Pleasant Driver Obituary" The Anaconda Standard, Jan

Driver first to Texas, then to Montana; his exodus from the South placed his movements among a small but significant portion of the African American population that left between the Exoduster migration in the late 1870s, and the Great Migration starting in 1915.⁵² Like most of the black infantry and cavalry units, the 25th moved north from the deserts of the Southwest to wide expanses of North Dakota and Montana in 1891.

Following the Pine Ridge Campaign of the same year, most Buffalo Soldiers were stationed at forts across Montana. Driver was stationed with the 25th at Fort Missoula in 1891 when he mustered out of the Army, eventually settling in Anaconda in 1895.

Regiments or companies of black soldiers were common in nearly all of the state's forts for the next several decades; even after the Spanish American and Philippines conflicts at the turn of the century.⁵³ Augmenting the flow of young black men into the territory and state of Montana by way of the military were numerous men and women who arrived via the railroad as porters, laborers, and travelers in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as those who traveled to the end of the Missouri River steamboat line, disembarking at Fort Benton, Montana. By the 1890s and early 1900s, black families, like that of Lee Pleasant Driver, made Montana's urban cities and towns their homes.

12, 1935. Page 6. ; R.L. Polk & Co, Polk's 1902 Anaconda (Deer Lodge County, Mont.) City Directory. 126. *Military Service*, Ancestry.com. U.S., Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1963 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012. *And Fisk College history*, "History of Fisk College", available online at <http://www.fisk.edu/about/history>.

⁵² For scholarship on the Exodusters, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, (New York: Knopf, 1976); Bryan Jack, *The St. Louis African American Community and the Exodusters*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007). For more on The Great Migration, see, James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*, (New York: Viking, 2010).

⁵³ Bruce A. Glasrud, and Michael N. Searles. *Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldiers Anthology* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press), 2007.

Popular notions of the West also likely played a role in the largest influx of African Americans. In line with ideological principles of self-betterment and earning a salary, the Army presented thousands of African Americans the opportunity to make a living wage and escape slavery-like living conditions and the stench of Jim Crow. The African American military tradition reaches back to colonial times. As a matter of official recognition, however, the first detachment of all-black soldiers fought for the Union Army during the latter years of the Civil War. Between 1866 and 1869, the newly constituted United States Army reconfigured the original companies into four military units—the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Colored Infantry Regiments. Soon afterward, they began their deployment in the American Southwest protecting westward moving settlers. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, in addition to their regular duties of manning forts and defending military outposts and frontier towns, the two infantry regiments performed public service jobs such as stringing telegraph wire across the vast expanse of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. In contrast, the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments led far more exciting but dangerous lives, fighting various native peoples in all-out campaigns and brief skirmishes, earning them a certain amount of renown among recently established African American and white communities in the western territories.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ There is a wealth of sources detailing the lives and history of the Buffalo Soldiers. Analysis, surveys, and primary sources are all included in the vast and ever expanding scholarship of the military and black soldiers. See, Bruce A. Glasrud, and Michael N. Searles. *Buffalo Soldiers in the West a Black Soldiers Anthology* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007); Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1971); Theodore Harris, ed. *Negro Frontiersman: The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, First Negro Graduate of West Point* (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1963); Koelle, Alexandra V. “Pedaling on the Periphery: The African American Twenty-Fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps and the Roads of American Expansion,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 41:3 (2010), 305–26; Ann Lane, *The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction* (N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971); Frank Schubert, ed. *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources,

Beginning in the late 1880s, the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments gradually migrated north to the Dakotas and the Montana Territory. Over the next decade Forts Shaw, Maginnis, Custer, Keogh, Assiniboine, Harrison, and Missoula, became a temporary home for the Buffalo Soldiers. It was during this time that the 25th captured the American public's imagination as an experimental Bicycle division. Seeking to replace expensive horses with cheaper forms of transportation, the military personnel of the 25th performed patrols and other duties on two wheels. The experiment gained national attention when, in 1897, these African American cyclists embarked upon a remarkable journey from Missoula to St. Louis.⁵⁵

In 1898 the Spanish-American War broke out on the island of Cuba, marking a temporary end to the western deployment of the Buffalo Soldiers. All four regiments were redeployed to active combat duty. The 10th Cavalry became renowned for its gallant charge up San Juan Hill alongside Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, while the other regiments equally distinguished themselves in less celebrated clashes with the enemy. In fact, both the 10th and the 24th played a significant role in the capture of San Juan Hill as well as in the battle for El Caney. In the immediate aftermath of America's success in Cuba, the Buffalo Soldiers were sent to repress guerilla fighters in the Philippines, a highly controversial campaign that would last for years. The wars in Cuba and the Philippines had a lasting impact on the shape of Montana's African American

1995); Anthony Wood, "After the West Was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth-Century Montana," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 66:3 (Autumn 2016), 36-50.

⁵⁵ Alexandra V. Koelle, "Pedaling on the Periphery: The African American Twenty-Fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps and the Roads of American Expansion," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 41:3 (2010), 305-26.

communities between 1904 and 1910. During this time, a number of the companies were stationed in Montana forts between the first and second conflicts in the Philippines, the later taking place in 1906-1907. Not a few returned home from the harsh tropical conditions weary of both a war that was not their own and a government that required of them such great sacrifices. For these reasons, many black soldiers chose not to reenlist with the Army, and to pick up their civilian lives. A sizable number of those black men in Montana from 1905 to 1910 decided to make the Big Sky their permanent home following the Spanish American and Philippines conflicts.⁵⁶

It should not be lost on twenty-first century readers that all three of the Buffalo Soldiers' major deployments represented decidedly colonial and imperial projects. Cuba and the Philippines have since been tied to the global aspirations of imperialist president Theodore Roosevelt. It was under the leadership of the twenty-sixth president that black troops were deployed to the Philippines in 1901 and 1906, and were then stationed in the American West. The Buffalo Soldiers, in this way, serve as a tangible connection between American colonialism and the policies of the first "western" president. As agents of imperialism wherever they went, the experiences of black military men in the West differed significantly from their time in Cuba or the South Pacific. Notably, whereas overseas campaigns manifested their colonial project through sheer military aggression, the deployment in Montana and the West served a military and social function. Not only did black military men protect western settlers, in many instances, they became settlers themselves.

⁵⁶ Anthony Wood, "After the West Was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth-Century Montana," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 66:3 (Autumn 2016), 36-50.

Miles City and Havre both became home to modest black populations due to their close proximity to Fort Keogh and Fort Assiniboine, respectively. These communities slowly faded away as the black units were removed from the northern frontier at the onset of WWI. However, Missoula and Helena both enjoyed lasting communities due to a high number of Buffalo Soldiers that took up permanent residence there. In 1907, Helena's African American newspaper, *The Montana Plaindealer*, recorded the names of twenty-seven men identified as former Buffalo Soldiers living in Helena, asking for their attendance at a meeting. Three years later, nearly twenty additional African American men appeared in the federal census of Helena's permanent residents that were previously listed as members of the 24th Infantry Regiment in the 1903 and 1904 directories of Helena that included nearby Fort Harrison. From these sources, as well as tracking individuals year by year in city directories, we know upwards of thirty-five to forty men left the Twenty-Fourth during the time that it was stationed at Fort Harrison (1902–1905), and continued to live and work in Helena up until 1910. Nearly all of these men were married, and a majority had two or more children. Consequently as many as one quarter of the population of African Americans living in Helena during this five-year period were directly connected to a Buffalo Soldier.⁵⁷

The Invisible Migration in the Press

It is difficult to compare this movement of only a few thousand people over a thirty-year span to the tens of thousands of thousands of black people who fled the Deep

⁵⁷ Anthony Wood, "After the West Was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth-Century Montana," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 66:3 (Autumn, 2016) 36-50.

South for Kansans, Missouri, and Oklahoma during the Exoduster period, notwithstanding the millions that migrated north from 1915 to 1965. Yet, migration is not about mere numbers—though the exclusionary allocation of the black population to a handful of cities does somewhat account for that. Migrations elicit a sense of purpose and direction. Even in nature, our definitions of migrations are bound by an understanding that movement in all species is intrinsically tied to the mitigation of an environmental circumstance or to fulfill an instinct. Likewise, our understanding of human migration also carries a significant qualitative understanding.⁵⁸ With vast populations of people moving out of the South during the Great Migration, scholars often focus solely on the purposes and contributing factors of that movement. By looking at the scholarship of the other migrations, the parallels between them and the Invisible Migration to Montana around the turn of the century becomes clear.

James Gregory notes that during the early years of the Great Migration, Northern white newspapers published an array of pieces that dealt with the new influx of Southern blacks. Papers from Chicago to New York wrote of the impending pressures that the new populations were sure to bring. Questions of social and cultural mixing were pondered in public in editorials titled, “The Negro Problem,” “The Race Problem in Schools,” and “The Negro Influx Proves Burden.”⁵⁹ Such sentiments reflected weekly in print can be interpreted several ways. It can be seen as a response to pure numbers, the physical presence of more Southern blacks in Northern cities may have caused certain issues to

⁵⁸ See “A Century of Migration,” in James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 11-41.

⁵⁹ Gregory, 47-48.

arise. But more likely, and more accurately, they were manifestations of systemic and personal racism targeting the attempted advancement of African Americans. This interpretation carries special significance for our understanding of the Invisible Migration to the West in the late 1800s. Indicative of the greater public, newspapers displayed social fears and anxieties. Like the Northern papers in 1916 and 1917, Western papers in the 1890s and 1900s also exhibited similar anxieties about African Americans.⁶⁰

The *Anaconda Standard* Sunday morning paper of November 19, 1899, printed the story “Fading of the Negro Race” and its claims that due to the supposedly incorrect results of the 1870 federal census, African Americans had lost, not gained, population in the preceding decade. As such, the article went on to claim that those losses were proof that African Americans were not suited for their new place in a more equitable society and were doomed to die out.⁶¹ This article, and the many like it, responded to the fear that many southern whites and their northern sympathizers held that the black population during Reconstruction was set to dominate aspects of American society, namely industry and politics.⁶² The serf-like agrarian social niche that many southerners saw the black

⁶⁰ Montana’s local and state newspapers at this time were somewhat indicative of other early publications. Towns often printed a Republican and Democratic paper, and various other periodicals with political affiliations. In addition, Montana cities like Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls published papers that fell along pro-union or pro-company lines as well. Montana’s two black news outlets, *The Butte New Age* (1901-1902), and *The Montana Plaindealer* (1906-1912), represented largely Republican views, yet both occasionally broke from white Republicans to voice the dissent of the black community on a number of issues. For information on early Montana newspapers, see Gayle K. Berardi and Thomas W Segady, “The Development of African-American Newspapers in the American West: A Sociohistorical Perspective,” *The Journal of Negro History* 75, no. 3/4 (1990), 96-111; Rex C. Meyers, “Montana’s Negro Newspapers, 1894-1911,” *Montana Journalism Review* 16 (Fall 1973). Also, information about many early Montana papers available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

⁶¹ *The Anaconda Standard*, November 19, 1899. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

⁶² The concept of “race extinction” existed as a major concern in both white and black communities in the 1890s. Fredrick Hoffman, a German social scientist was hired by the U.S. government to analyze the new census in 1890. In 1892, Hoffman printed his *Vital Statistics of the Negro*. It was a cold pronouncement of African Americans’ future racial prospects. Historian Michele Mitchell noted that

population filling was, for more and more southern blacks, no better than slavery. The push against that niche within the black community began early during Reconstruction and was eventually coopted by the ideological movements of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. Articles like the one appearing for readers in Butte and Anaconda, Montana, were more than sensationalized pieces against African Americans—they were attempts to sooth the anxieties of many white Americans. The fact that such a piece would run in the cooperate paper of a mining towns, each home to a modest black population at the time suggests that the Anaconda Company’s employees and their families were contending with the cultural and social realities of their new neighbors on a daily basis.⁶³

In 1901, the *Butte Inter-Mountain* spelled out a similar position in a piece on the same subject. Written by a reporter in Butte, Montana specifically for publishing in the daily:

There were many who affected to see danger in the steady Increase of the negro population. It was pointed out that in time the colored race would increase until the problem now being dealt with in the South would become more difficult of solution and the Southern states be the home of such a large black population that the white inhabitants would be in a hopeless minority. The report of the census bureau in completed form

Hoffman’s analysis of “racial deterioration” largely grew from his condemnation of black women, who had a high level of early motherhood, and stillbirths. His disdain for black femininity along with “general intemperance” led to Hoffman proclaiming that the Negro race would vanish. The response of the black community to this assertion of their erasure focused on the policies of uplift, often including civic and industrial participation. See Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) 81-84.

⁶³ For information and sources on Anaconda’s early black community, see, Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, (available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf.)

dissipates these fears. It is seen that not withstanding the Increase in the negro population the percentage of blacks In the South is lowered.⁶⁴

Again the response of the white community in part suggests that Montanans were at least engaged in the national dialog that extended from the South. Outside of publishing articles and editorials of similar persuasions from 1880-1910 (one appearing in the Virginia City paper as early as 1865), both Democratic and Republican papers across the state lent their voice to issue of race and the societal role of African Americans in other ways.⁶⁵

Most notably, Democratic papers printed crime statistics and reports from the South where black men were convicted and lynched for supposedly heinous crimes.⁶⁶ Clearly, these types of provocations were aimed not necessarily to inform their readership, but to influence their opinion on the subject of race within their own community. Fanning the flames of race conflict occurring in far removed locals had the effect of bringing the conflict to a head in their own cities. The treatment of black crime in Montana was virtually identical to how papers reported crime elsewhere where they prominently declared the race war at large.

⁶⁴ The Butte Inter-Mountain, November 5, 1901. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

⁶⁵ For other articles on the race question in Montana, see, "No Drink and No Shine: The Experiences of a Colored Citizen of Billings in Helena," *Anaconda Standard*, Sunday, September 23, 1894, page 7; "Negro Conference at Tuskegee: The Present Meeting Shows the Good Results of Educating the Black Man on Practical Lines," *Anaconda Standard*, Sunday, February 19, 1899, page 19; "Must Educate or Kill Them: Booker T. Washington a Freak," *The Kalispell Bee*, Friday, September 25, 1903, page 5; "The Negro Problem," *The Daily Missoulian*, Monday, February 8, 1909, page 2; "The Value of Wool," *The Montana Post*, Saturday, September 2, 1865, page 1.

⁶⁶ For some examples of reporting on "negro crime," see, "Henry Salzner the Wife Murderer is Lynched," *Billings Gazette*, Friday, November 12, 1909, page 1; "Was Burned at the Stake: Negro Murderer Paid a Frightful Penalty for a most Horrible Crime," *Anaconda Standard*, Monday, April 24, 1899, page 1; "It is not because they are Negroes that they are lynched, but because they are fiends," *Rosebud County News*, July 16, 1903, page 4.

In addition to the negative press during and after the Invisible Migration, factions of progressive minded Montanans also utilized local papers to respond against overt racism. Positive press in Montana ranged from commending local African Americans for various achievements to complete editorials championing the success of African Americans as a whole. Editorials such as *The Negro Problem* lauded the character and patriotism of Booker T. Washington in the pages of *The Daily Missoulian*. “There is no smarter man in this country, no man of larger usefulness, than Booker T. Washington, a full-blooded negro.”⁶⁷ Whether or not pieces such as this one appearing in February, 1909, were responding to the array of negative writings that laced the pages of Montana’s periodicals, or was itself the kind of thinking those authors were responding to, cannot be said. However, white Americans often admired Washington because of his emphasis on black people improving their own condition rather than challenging segregation immediately.

It can be said, however, that Montana’s cities—though being home to only small enclaves of black residents—were still preoccupied by the national conversation that surrounded the issue of race. Both sides of the argument were voiced within the newspapers and public life of the state’s overwhelmingly white population. Though the number of African Americans moving in to the state may have been modest, the event at the time was surely not invisible. The visibility of the black migration to Montana is attested by the need for papers and state powers to remind their readers often of the supposed vice and crime that a black population might bring; undergirded by the

⁶⁷ The Daily Missoulian, February 8, 1909. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

assumption (or perhaps an assurance) that the African American “race” was not long for their new settler society in Montana.

Conclusion

The inherent paradoxes between black settlers and the settler colonial project that aspires to whiteness is evident both in the lives and aspirations of those African Americans who moved to Montana, as well as in the white community’s varied responses to their arrival. The dialog that engaged Montanans around the turn of the century represented more than a latent interest in issues of race in the greater, national arena. Seen within the context of real black migration to the state, white newspapers expressed the personal anxieties of the “negro problem” or the “race question” because it promised to present itself within their own community. Similarly, the black press portrayed the West, and the availability of land, as a golden opportunity for the oppressed people of African descent. As far back as the Exoduster migration of 1878, black communities sprung up from Kansas, to Oklahoma, to Colorado. In these towns, the beginning of the “black West” rested solidly upon the colonial project of land appropriation. Little changed as the Invisible Migration commenced shortly after.

The Invisible Migration was comprised of families and individuals, all with unique lives and circumstances. However, their collective movement out of the South between the Exodusters in 1878 and Great Migration in 1915 speaks to the desire for physical and social mobility. The avenues in which African Americans reached Montana, be it the railroad, riverboat, or military all fit within the emerging beliefs that southern blacks needed to cast off the slavery-like social niche they were expected to fill. Yet the

same causes of the black community's initial growth were intimately connected to the appropriation of indigenous land, and the elimination of the Native population.

The beginning of black migration to Montana Territory in the 1870s and 1880s occurred in the immediate aftermath of Indian removal in the region. Following the garrisoning of Montana's forts during the Civil War, settlers and Native tribes came into increasingly contentious contact. From 1855 and the first treaties spearheaded by Governor Isaac Stevens until 1890 and the last Sioux conflict that flared up in the wake of Wounded Knee, the federal and territorial government consistently reduced the size and range of reservations and hunting grounds, forcing the Sioux, Flathead, Northern Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Nez Perce, and nearly a dozen other tribes onto impoverished reservations.⁶⁸

The vision of the Golden West that was recognized by both African Americans living in Montana around the turn of the century and by those living elsewhere, looking in cannot be divorced from the problematic relationship between settler colonial structures and the narratives of black diasporas. Black settlers in Lewistown, Livingston, and especially White Sulphur Springs—populations that boomed in the 1880s and 1890s—only moved into central Montana and the Judith Basin area after the 1870 Baker Massacre on the Marias River in which the Second Calvary murdered 173 Blackfeet, including 53 women and children.⁶⁹ By the mid-1870s the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres,

⁶⁸ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 117.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

Assiniboine, and Sioux mostly fled the lush plains and mineral rich earth of Judith Basin and the surrounding area to an ever decreasing reservation north of the Missouri River.⁷⁰

Black men like Walker Browning waited in anticipation for the continued success of the settler project. From 1880 through 1882, the Crow, for instance, relinquished the right of way for the path of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which Browning and hundreds of others immediately helped build through the southeastern part of the territory from the Dakotas to Billings.⁷¹ The erosion of Native sovereignty was the necessary precursor to the economic opportunity that allowed the growth of black enclaves in Havre, Miles City, and Billings. Likewise, following the disastrous winter of 1883 that crippled the health and vitality of many Native peoples living on Montana's severely under-resourced reservations, white settlers inexplicably continued the frantic call for federal military support.⁷² Even as the ability of many Native tribes to resist white expansion withered, the Army chose to place the four black regiments, stationed up until this point in the Southwest, at forts across the state to preside over the final erosion of Native power. The mission of the Buffalo Soldiers in this respect was informed entirely by the logic of settlement.

As this thesis continues to place the history of the black community in Montana within a broader framework of analysis of the settler colonial West, it is vital to recognize the participation of African Americans in the "bleeding edge" processes of land appropriation and settlement. The westward expansion of America truly was a national project. Moreover, it was a project in which the oppressed black community could

⁷⁰ Ibid., 121.

⁷¹ Ibid., 143.

⁷² Ibid., 141.

participate and thus become part of the nation, at least in their estimations. African Americans commonly emphasized certain occupations and practices as ways that black citizens could be accepted as Americans. Service in the military, education, and property ownership all conveyed some level of belonging, and the West served as a conduit for many of these same “Americanizing” projects.⁷³ Yet the settler colonial West was born out of a social structure erected upon a foundation of appropriation, not exploitation. As such, the process of appropriation—which encouraged removal, erasure, and even genocide, and sought the initial establishment of a settler state by any means necessary—would, by its very nature, give way to a state of whiteness.⁷⁴

The chapters that follow illustrate how the settler state which black Montanans helped establish from the very beginning sought to remove that community. Many non-white communities participated in the settlement of the American West. Mormons, Jews, Irish-Catholics, Asian, and various eastern European peoples also came as settlers, and were compelled to conform to the region’s whiteness, or be forced out.⁷⁵ Black and Asian communities faced similar fates. Unlike the others, who could eventually conform to the standards of the white West, Black westerners remained, in perpetuity, non-white.⁷⁶

⁷³ Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) 144.

⁷⁴ See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991) 21,22; David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 162.

⁷⁵ See, W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2006); also see, “The Politics of Whiteness and Western Expansion, 1848-1880,” in Jason E. Pierce, *Making the White Man’s West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West* (Boulder, University Press of Colorado, 2016) 123-149.

⁷⁶ See, “Racialism on the Run,” in Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: the Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987) 257-292; Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*, (New York: Random House, 2007).

By the time that the Invisible Migration came to an end, several thousand black men and women had come to Montana, and at its peak in 1910, nearly two thousand remained as permanent Montana residents.⁷⁷ The sometimes vitriolic response of the white community against the possibility of new black neighbors could be seen as foreshadowing the trials that still lay ahead. Even in the midst of a choreographed individual, group, and state effort to remove the black population from Montana over the next two to three decades, African Americans across the state nevertheless established thriving, growing, and vibrant communities which seemed to be on the brink of the success. The “West” in its most idealized form, promised the opportunity for community growth and various forms of property ownership that leaders of the race like Booker T. Washington felt were central to economic and, eventually, social equality. Given its ties to ideology, it is no wonder that black community created its own vision of a life in Montana that addressed the unique challenges presented by an aspiring white society. As such, the vision African Americans had for their community, what I call the Washingtonian West, came up against, and was informed by the incongruent relationship with the white settler state.

⁷⁷ Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, (available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf.)

CHAPTER TWO

THE WASHINGTONIAN WEST:

SOCIAL IDEOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF RACE IN MONTANA

The lives of John W. Duncan and his wife Armeta modeled the experiences of a successful, progressive African American family in Butte, Montana. John and Armeta met in 1905; the future Mrs. Duncan was utterly confident that she could woo John, who was purportedly “not the marrying type.”⁷⁸ Two years before, from 1902-1903, John had been the co-editor of the *Butte New Age*, Montana’s first African American weekly published by and “in the interests of Colored people.”⁷⁹ He split his time in the press with his professional career as a barber. Those two occupations paired as well together in Montana as they did in the upper South, where politically active barbershops had been a staple of local cultures for over a century.⁸⁰ After the paper ended circulation, he continued as a barber, eventually buying his own shop. In October of 1919, after more than two decades in Butte, John Duncan made a drastic career move and began studying at the University of Massachusetts School of Podiatry and Orthopedics at Emerson College in Boston. After two years, and with a degree in hand, Duncan returned to his family home to open his own practice.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Armeta Duncan, interview by Quintard Taylor, “Mrs. Armeta Duncan,” April 4, 1974, (Spokane: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002).

⁷⁹ *The Butte New Age*, available online at Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

⁸⁰ Douglas Bristol, Jr., “From Outposts to Enclaves: A History of Black Barbers from 1715-1915,” *Enterprise and Society* 5:4 (December 2004), 594-606.

⁸¹ Armeta Duncan, interview by Quintard Taylor, “Mrs. Armeta Duncan,” April 4, 1974, (Spokane: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002).

Dr. Duncan's podiatry clinic treated the weary and broken feet of Butte's black laborers and white copper miners alike until just before his death in 1958. During that same time, his wife Armeta organized and engaged the black community on numerous issues. In 1923, she became a founding member and president of the Montana State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, reflecting both the Duncans' lives of service to their community. In 1928, the couple purchased their second home located at 715 West Park Avenue, in Butte's west side neighborhood.⁸² From their new vantage, the Duncans could look across the ever expanding Mining City. All around them headframes marked the entrance to Butte's mine tunnels that splintered and forked beneath the city for thousands of miles. To the south only a few blocks, the Emma Mine neighborhood on the east side of Montana Avenue, and the Shaffer's Chapel neighborhood on the west were home to many of Butte's black residents.⁸³ West Park Street climbed the hill westward from the Duncan home to the entrance of the Mining College, where today, Copper King Marcus Daly stands watch over his domain, captured in bronze.

The Duncans' spacious new home, as well as their second home nearby, stood testament to John and Armeta's fortitude and business acumen. This pattern of education, business initiative, and home ownership would likely have been praised by Booker T. Washington for the manner in which it brought about self-betterment. Perhaps John and Armeta even discussed that very subject with Washington in 1913 when he stayed with

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See, "Mapping Historic Places" online at <https://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/Places/Sanborns>.

the Duncans during a lecture tour stop he made in the mining city that year.⁸⁴ When Dr. Quintard Taylor interviewed Mrs. Duncan in 1976, then in her 90s, she recalled little of what they discussed. At the time of Washington's visit to Montana, his health was beginning to fade, and he had moved on from some of his more controversial positions. Nevertheless, the small black enclave of Butte and other Montana towns carried several of his ideological trademarks.

As more African Americans migrated to settler colonial spaces like Montana, the logic of settlement and the intense social emphasis on the possession of land dovetailed with the uplift and accumulation principles of the Great Educator, Booker T. Washington. Black Montanans' early participation in settler expansion across the state not only promised the opportunity of new lives largely free from racial persecution (though this ultimately proved not to be the case), but also the possibility for them to own the land recently taken from Indigenous peoples and thus accumulate wealth and power. However, the very society which seemed to make these promises also aspired to whiteness, resorting to all manners of exclusion to achieve the whitening of the West.

When black Montanans confronted new structures of racism that were formed within this very system, they often sought to subvert the goals of the settler state. For this, the accommodationist ideologies of Washington increasingly proved to be insufficient. Montana's black political environment thus assimilated many activist principles of race men like W. E. B. Du Bois, who decidedly rejected the notion that African Americans could enter the power structure solely by accumulating wealth and private property. As

⁸⁴ Armeta Duncan, interview by Quintard Taylor, "Mrs. Armeta Duncan," April 4, 1974, (Spokane: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002).

black Montanans struggled to assert their self-possession and membership in the “Nation,” their very ability to have meaningful engagement in the political system was subject to the erosive designs of the settler state. They met these challenges largely by straddling the ideological divide that had widened between the two most prominent black intellectuals who rose from the ruin of Reconstruction. Prominent newspaper editors and “race” men and women like Armeta and John Duncan of Butte, and Joseph Bass of Helena gave a voice to the hybrid ideology of the Washingtonian West. Their response, chronicled in print, illustrates the incongruent relationship between the aspirations of black settlers and the settler society that aspired to whiteness.



Washington and Du Bois

The ideology of Booker T. Washington is not difficult to find in Montana’s archive. One does not need to read into events or actions to see that Washington was influential. He was one of the most dominant thinkers of his day. He made sure of it. Though many disagreed with him, the “Wizard of Tuskegee” remained a force in America after Reconstruction. His influence was compounded by a tight control of much of the country’s black press, as well as a good deal of promotion by the white Republican journals. He preached that only through economic equality and independence could African Americans truly ever be free. The path to this freedom for Washington lay clearly in a life of industrial education and property ownership. In time, he believed, civil equality would follow the long process of self-betterment. This “from the bootstraps” message was among the most popular depictions of Washington. There were many other,

less admiring opinions of the Great Educator, however. Within the Southern black community especially, his message often appeared to be accommodationist at best and bordering on submission to white supremacy at the very worst. Moreover, his dismissal of agitating for civil rights won him many enemies.⁸⁵

Washington had no greater intellectual rival than W. E. B. Du Bois.⁸⁶ While maintaining the respect that each great thinker and spokesperson for their race deserved, the two sharply disagreed on the accommodationist undertones of Washington's ideology. Du Bois saw the decades of Washingtonian practices degrading not only the civil liberties of black southerners, but also the foundation of Washington's own beliefs. "As result of the tender of the palm branch, what has been the return? The steady withdraw of aid from institutions for the higher education of the Negro."⁸⁷ Evident from such comments in his 1903 work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois saw utter foolishness in many of Washington's educational practices: "He advocates common-school and industrial training, and depreciates institutions of higher learning; but neither the Negro

⁸⁵ Numerous studies on Booker T. Washington have been published. His own autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, remains an important insight to the origins of the "great educator." Scholars generally follow two lines of analysis, first being one of understanding, the second being more critical of his positions. For more, see Louis R. Harlan, *The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery, an Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, 1901); Booker T. Washington, *The Future of the American Negro* (New York: Haskell House, 1899); Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm so Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998).

⁸⁶ Like Washington, Du Bois has garnered a mountain of scholarship dedicated to understanding the complexities of his life. Perhaps more than most scholars, his own work reveals a great deal how Du Bois thought, and interacted with others, especially Washington. For more, see W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903); W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1920); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993).

⁸⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903), 31.

common-school, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day were it not for teachers trained in Negro colleges, or trained by their graduates.”⁸⁸

Besides dissatisfaction with Washington’s educational premises, Du Bois lamented his unwillingness to challenge white Americans on issues of civil liberties. Washington placed a higher value on the education of black children and the accumulation of wealth than all other means of advancement. For Du Bois, it is noteworthy that Washington called for this curriculum to be carried out at the expense of voting rights and civil justice. It must be noted also that Booker T. Washington spent a great deal of his later life working behind the scenes to secure civil rights legislation across the country; on occasion, made these feelings public in speeches that certainly carried more Du Boisian radicalness than his typical style.⁸⁹ During his lifetime, Washington rose above Du Bois, if not in intellect or scholarliness, then certainly in public perception. Even Du Bois could not deny Washington’s keen ability to use both the black and white press to further his mission. Writing in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois admitted that Washington was a man of unrelenting energy, whose singularly focused program earned him “unquestioning followers.” Even as he rejected his methods, Du Bois commended his rival, saying, “[h]is work prospered, his friends are legion, and his enemies are confounded.”⁹⁰

As citizens under the settler government, the political lives of African Americans living in Montana straddled the ideological divide of this great debate. Self-ascribed

⁸⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁹ Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 370.

⁹⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903), 26.

followers of Washington championed the educational opportunities of Montana and bragged of black business and home ownership—all Washingtonian aspirations—but carried a tone and public demeanor much closer to Du Bois. Black newspapers and social clubs, while proudly waving the flag of Washington, agitated like Du Bois. On major issues, such as voting rights and civic involvement, that black Montanans engaged in civil processes *en masse*. To be more accurate, the black voting base was seen as an unthreatening yet exploitable population by state Republicans and even some Democrats, and was courted and encouraged.⁹¹ As such, the two driving causes of anti-Washington sentiments had a substantially lesser effect on the Montana community.

In many ways, the building of the Washingtonian West occurred alongside the influxes of the Invisible Migration. While each city where a sizeable population of African Americans lived varied somewhat in the percentage of home ownership, or the success of their black businesses—each community eventually enjoyed a growth of their black middle class. This in turn led to the continued success of black groceries, saloons, clubs, drug stores, and any number of other small businesses. In addition to the success of the smaller number of slightly more affluent black Montanans, laboring African Americans also managed to accumulate enough wealth or collateral so as to purchase a home, often times establishing black neighborhoods. With a steady job and residence, black community members in Anaconda, Butte, Billings, Great Falls, Helena, and

⁹¹ It must also be noted that while Republicans relied on black voters in many local elections to carry the office, when promises of civil rights advancements, or egregious acts of racism were carried out by those officials, black Montanans protested with scathing opinion pieces, and quite possibly by a retaliation at the ballot box.

Missoula enjoyed a measure of security in their lives, stable families, and children who could then receive a public education.

African American Education in Montana

Still, black residents of Montana by no means enjoyed equality. Prior to 1872, the territory of Montana passed no law segregating the education of white and black children. However, the territorial legislature of 1871 passed article 34 of the general education statutes, stating that children of “African descent” were to be educated in separate facilities; the establishment of those facilities would follow the application of at least ten black children to a school board of trustees. The law lasted until 1895, straddling four years of statehood. In that time, Montana had by the best estimates only a few dozen children of “African descent” who sought to attend public schools.⁹² In cases like that of the son of a black woman, America Turner, in 1873—the school board of Deer Lodge refused admittance to the child under the new law. Conversely in Fort Benton in 1881, the school board granted attendance to a black student, inciting an outcry from segregation’s proponents. Meanwhile, White Sulphur Springs saw as many as one-third of the white parents threaten to remove their own children if a black boy was allowed to attend.⁹³ Though the number of black children seeking entrance to public schools prior to 1895 in many towns and counties never even approached ten, many still were turned away entirely. Thus, it is impossible to determine the number of black children who were denied their education prior to 1895 in Montana’s more rural cities.

⁹² J.W. Smurr, “Jim Crow out West,” in *Historical Essays on Montana and the Northwest*, J.W. Smurr and K. Ross Toole, eds. (Helena: The Western Press, 1957), 167.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 179.

The question of school segregation played itself out during the early stages of the Invisible Migration. At the time the law was penned in 1871, only 346 African Americans lived in the territory, only a few dozen or so children among them. By 1880, the bill had been upheld several times, both being met with criticism and support.⁹⁴ In the 1890s, as the black population eclipsed a thousand individuals, the weight of segregation had already been noted on the finances of the more populous districts.⁹⁵ Helena, as early as 1877, experienced budget shortfalls and depleted its school fund when South School was filled with only twelve black children. In March of 1882, Helena voted to reject the segregated school system, and to allow the five black children to attend. That same year, Montana schools ended the practice of officially labeling students of being “of African descent.”⁹⁶ For that reason, it is difficult to know how desegregated schools were prior to 1895. The process actually began in the territorial legislature of 1883, when the general education bill was amended to read “no child shall be refused admission to any public school on account of race or color.” However, by 1887, the original language of section 34 reappeared in legislative statutes—but historian J.W. Smurr noted in his insightful essay “Jim Crow Out West,” that the old law had lost much of its weight, and the issue was on the slow climb to official desegregation in 1895.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Ibid., 184-185.

⁹⁵ For Statistics on census records, populations, and ethnic demographics see, Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf.

⁹⁶ J.W. Smurr, “Jim Crow out West,” in *Historical Essays on Montana and the Northwest*, J.W. Smurr and K. Ross Toole, eds. (Helena: The Western Press, 1957), 184.

⁹⁷ It is important to note that Smurr’s essay was written and printed very much a part of the national discourse on segregation following the decision of *Brown v. Board* in 1954.

Owning Black Montana

Attendance in school typically followed the stability of family life—the most recognizable representation of that being home ownership. While a majority of black families in Montana rented their homes or rooms around the turn of the century, there was a sizable population of black home owners across the state. In 1910, when the community was at its peak, 100 homes were owned by African Americans in the seven major urban centers: Anaconda, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula. Bozeman's small black community overwhelmingly owned their own homes, with only twelve of the thirty-four people having to rent their home in 1910. Billings and Great Falls each boasted home ownership rates of 31 and 42 percent, respectively. The black communities of these two cities persisted well into the 1940s and 1950s, longer than any other in the state. Helena, Butte, and Missoula had home ownership rates between 20 and 26 percent. Anaconda fell behind all others in 1910 with only Frank Walker owning his home in that year, though that number rose to ten by 1930, even with the black population falling in Anaconda by about ten percent over those two decades.⁹⁸

These figures vary slightly throughout the years, trending towards more homeownership by 1930 in the midst of dwindling populations, suggesting that the poorer element who rented homes were the first to leave. In the context of the state's relatively compact black neighborhoods, even these modest numbers of black homes created a sense of cohesion and community. Moreover, home ownership elicited a

⁹⁸ Data on homeownership rates is taken from the 1910 and 1930 Federal Census reports. African American specific census spread sheets are available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

tangible pride. As the accumulation of property was a tenet of Washingtonian beliefs, it is completely understandable that pride in black property consistently paired with discussions on the “progress of the negro” and other ideological axioms.

J.B. Bass, the black editor of the *Montana Plaindealer* in Helena, at times printed pieces expounding the virtues of the black community. Included in his praises of character and spiritual fortitude, was inevitably a section on business and property ownership.

Brother J. J. Baker very kindly gathered for us a list of the property owners in Helena. They follow with their valuation: G.W. Alexander, \$6000, B.F. Hooper, \$6500, Mrs. R.C. Dorsey, \$8000, James Crump \$4000, J.E.W. Clark \$3000, Geo. W. Lee \$3000, Henry J. Baker \$3500, Mrs. E.G. Cole \$5000, Miles York \$4000, Nathaniel Ford \$4000, Jefferson Harrison \$3000, C.C. Mathis \$1500, Nathan Walker \$1500, L.C. Foreman \$1500, Arthur Palmer \$1500, Logan Smith, \$1500, Sergeant Robinson \$1200, Sergeant Smith \$1000, L.C. Mathis \$1500, Robert Brown \$1200, W.C. Rose \$4500, Mrs. Annie Marshall \$2000, Alonzo Leatherbury \$1000, Spencer Smith \$300, Mr. William Miner \$1000, Robert Lucas \$1500, One AME Church \$15000. This showing ought to be reassuring to all members of the race everywhere. Full of encouragement for the betterment of the race, the party left the hospitable gates of Helena.⁹⁹

As a fervent supporter of Booker T. Washington, Bass used his paper, the circulation of which remained fairly regular for over five years, to impress upon his readers the value that property ownership brought to Helena’s African American community. For men and women like Bass, and many of those individuals mentioned in his manifesto, the accumulation of wealth was the outward expression of civil progress for all African Americans. In the Washingtonian West, the \$108,400.00 of combined property values of

⁹⁹ *Montana Plaindealer*, “Helena is Highly Praised by Masonic Visitors,” Friday, May 27, 1910, page 1.

29 homes (not including the value of businesses) was a product and, more importantly, a promise of future social and civil equality.

Across the state, homeownership rates remained high considering a majority of black homeowners earned meager wages. With property, even a waiter or porter like Jefferson Harrison of Helena could pride themselves as members of the black middle class.¹⁰⁰ The middle class radiated with the promise of Washingtonian advancements. Bass stated the goals of home ownership and the accumulation of wealth in unequivocal terms:

Our people make enough money to support not only retail stores, but wholesale houses as well. With the race patronage alone we would soon have rich merchants and capitalists carrying on large business enterprises in every section of the country, that would demand the respect and recognition of the world and then prejudices against the colored race would cease and every unjust law would be wiped out.¹⁰¹

In Helena, the African American newspaper pressed upon Montanans, both black and white, that the success seen in their city would be the path towards the elimination of “prejudices against the colored race.” Across the state, Washingtonians saw the promise of their property and their enterprises.

Bass’ assumption was flawed in several ways, however, not least of which being a complete underestimation of some people’s blind capacity for harboring their own prejudices. Insofar as Montana was concerned, he was mistaken on a key point. Black Montanans were not numerous enough, and most did not in fact make enough money to support every enterprising member of their community. Helena’s nightclub, the Zanzibar,

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910, Helena, Lewis and Clark, Montana, Roll T624_833, p. 13b, accessed online at ancestry.com.

¹⁰¹ *Montana Plaindealer*, “Five New Rights, White and Black,” Friday, May 26, 1911, page 1.

a black barber shop, and various tailoring parlors in the city were among the meager number of black businesses in the state—including the Ozark Jazz club in Great Falls—that could be sustained by a (nearly) all-black patronage. Even so, many of these still enjoyed white customers as well. The fact remained, regardless of what men like Bass wished to believe, most black business men and women placed their trust in the acceptance and patronage of the white community in the absence of other African Americans.

Many black businesses enjoyed their most profitable years between 1900 and 1910. Among other economic factors, the presence of former Buffalo Soldiers had a dramatic impact on the ability of black men and women to open and operate a variety of businesses. The promise of business ownership, however, was not limited to only those towns near large black military populations.¹⁰² A number of rural, medium-sized towns provided small numbers of African Americans who had the initiative and ability to open a variety of service operations. Diners and restaurants owned and operated by black women and men could be found in Miles City, Havre, Bozeman, White Sulphur Springs, Butte, Anaconda, and others. There were black owned clubs and saloons in nearly every major urban center. The gold, silver, and copper booms of the 1870-1900 provided the ability for many black men and women to move into predominantly white cities and open a business or shop and experience relative success. But these businesses often lasted only one generation. White patronage often faded after the death of the black business owner

¹⁰² Anthony Wood, “After the West was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth Century Montana,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 66:3 (Autumn 2016), 42.

who had come to be viewed as a staple in the business community, but not one to be replaced by other enterprising individuals.

The Politics of Black Montana

Where many, including the more radical W. E. B. Du Bois, saw the promise of black business and property ownership as impossible in the South given the oppression of Jim Crow and the rigidity of Southern white culture, the situation was slightly different in Montana and the West. Washingtonian ideologies at times appeared to be made for the West and its small, concentrated populations of African Americans. In addition to the opportunity for education and entrepreneurship, Republicans also relied upon black voters in local and city elections to propel them into office. African Americans were even the target of many Democratic campaigns on the state level, notably the vote for the location of the new State Capital in 1894.¹⁰³ Likewise, a handful of black men rose to offices like constables and clerks in the 1890s, and dozens were selected for political conventions around the state.¹⁰⁴ As such, because Montana and the West was not the same political and social climate as the South, African Americans could embrace the admirable positions of Washingtonianism without having to bear the full burden of accommodation and submission that caused many Southern blacks and W. E. B. Du Bois to reject Booker T. Washington.

This should be contrasted to the efforts in roughly the same era to restrict the voting rights of American Indians in Montana following the 1924 Indian Citizen Act. Just

¹⁰³ For a history of the *Colored Citizen* see, "About the Colored Citizen," available online at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84036198/>.

¹⁰⁴ "Walker Browning Obituary" Billings Gazette, Feb 8th 1925. Accessed at ancestry.com.

three years, only one full legislative cycle, after the US Congress extended the full protections of the 14th and 15th Amendments to all Indigenous peoples born in the United States, Montana passed a law that required all county commissioners and school board officials to be elected through an at large selection process. Senate Bill 17, in effect, made it impossible for natives in counties like Big Horn County with a large minority Indian population to elect their own representatives. This process, which Historian Orlan Svingen detailed in his essay, “Jim Crow, Indian Style,” continued and expanded the means of disenfranchisement well into the 1980s. Here the logic of settlement came to mirror the same types of methods of the Jim Crow South, as voter registration, participation, even civic dignity was systemically denied to Indians in Montana. Moreover, the afterlife of colonialism permeated the government as well as the opinions of the voters. Svingen notes one encounter that Gail Small, an attorney from Lame Deer, Montana, and candidate for the legislature, had when campaigning in 1984. After introducing herself to a local rancher he, “pointed off in the distance where the ruins lay of a blockhouse fortress used in the so-called ‘Cheyenne Outbreak’ of 1897. ‘It was just yesterday we were fighting you off,’ he replied to Small, ‘and now you want me to vote for you?’”¹⁰⁵

Perhaps an updated title of Svingen’s essay could be “Jim Crow, Settler Style.” Encounters like the one Small had with the local rancher, which she noted characterized many of the meetings she had with non-Indians, obliquely drew upon the land and settlement as their point of reference. After 1924, intensified racial categories of anti-

¹⁰⁵ Orlan Svingen, “Jim Crow, Indian Style” *American Indian Quarterly* 11:4 (Autumn 1987), 283.

blackness also contributed to the continued erosion of Native sovereignty and civic participation. The logic of settlement can still be seen as American Indians living off the reservations, supposedly assimilating into white culture, were not the primary targets of the 1927 legislation. The goal was to shackle Indians living in large numbers on the State's reservations from translating their large voter base into any kind of minority representation and, thus, political control over local and county lands. It is no great leap to suggest that if black Montanans had posed such a threat to the white political structure, similar actions would have been levied against them as well. In this hypothetical environment—that was very much the reality for Montana's Native peoples—it is not a given that the hybridization of Du Boisian resistance with the Washingtonian principle of accumulation would have so readily occurred.

The blending of the two men's social ideologies in Montana's black community was also born out of a necessity to agitate and engage the political system. Many uplift programs like education and property ownership eventually died on the vine, producing little fruit when confronting the exclusion of the white settler society. From the pages of his high school journal, sixteen year-old Jesse Lee Brooks keenly observed what he thought to be the ruination of African Americans in the West. In his column, re-printed in the *Montana Plaindealer* under the heading "Race Problem in the West," Brooks wrote:

Idleness is a great hindrance to any race or class of people. Yet, if employment is cut off on all sides by prejudiced beings who refuse to work with a man because he is of a little darker color, the result is the idleness of the oppressed...This is the predicament that the negroes in the West are in today, and this is the one thing that leaders of the race are trying to eliminate. It is almost impossible for an educated negro to use his education for his support... What we must have are highly educated leaders. We hear many criticisms of higher education of the negro, and

many say that university education is only time wasted. I do not agree with these critics. Not that industrial education should be minimized, but that higher education should be emphasized.¹⁰⁶

When Brooks decries it to be “impossible for an educated negro to use his education for his support,” he apparently referenced the industrial education championed by Washington and the paper’s editor, Joseph Bass. Brooks recognized the value of such education elsewhere in the country, but notes that in the West, where he lived, labor unions and state legislation undermined the key tenet of Washingtonian ideology. Therefore with “employment cut off on all sides,” and little opportunity for the higher education he desired, young Jesse Lee Brooks chose to leave Montana the next year. He attended Western University in Kansas—a black industrial college—where he studied music before moving to Los Angeles. There, the Montanan found work playing sheriffs and doctors in the black western films of Richard Kahn like *Two Gun Man From Harlem* (1938).¹⁰⁷ Like many Westerners, both black and white, he brought authenticity to many of his roles which resonated with the movie goers of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Harlem, eventually becoming one of the great black actors of his generation.¹⁰⁸

Brooks was a young man when he penned his thoughts on race in the West, but his homegrown politics reflected the intellectual milieu of community leaders and newspapermen like John Duncan, Chris Dorsey, and Joseph Bass. In 1901, Duncan and Dorsey—both of whom worked in the mining city of Butte as barbers—self-published the

¹⁰⁶ *The Montana Plaindealer*, May 27, 1910, page 1. (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹⁰⁷ For Jess Lee Brooks’ early and college career, see *The Montana Plaindealer*, February 24, 1911, page 1. (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov). For acting career, see *The California Eagle*, December 14, 1944, page 1. (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹⁰⁸ For a study on the perception of African Americans in westerns, see Michael K. Johnson, *Hoo-Doo Cowboys and Bronze Buckaroos: Conceptions of the African American West* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2014).

New Age. It was the first truly black paper in Montana; as the *Colored Citizen* which ran in 1894 for several months was funded by copper magnate William Clark solely as part of the campaign to select Helena as the permanent state capital.¹⁰⁹ The *New Age* modeled much of its content and message off prominent eastern papers like the *Chicago Defender*. Yet Duncan and Dorsey went beyond merely publishing accounts of lynching in the South or local happenings, but took aim at the racial politics of both the Anaconda Company and the miners' unions.

In the centerpiece of many of its issues, the *New Age* printed a lengthy statement of their position, including the following:

One of the chief aims and purposes of our journal which we shall endeavor to carry out to the best of our meager ability will be to at all times and in every conceivable way work and labor for the greatest political and legal rights which our race is guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States and the State of Montana, and to by every means bring the race in this State to a compact union, a fraternal spirit, free from all petty jealousies and dissensions—a perfectly united machine, adjusted in every part—in order that these rights may be attained.¹¹⁰

The commitment to state and local issues to which the editors spoke manifested in their many and varied dealings with the politics of Montana.

Editors Chris Dorsey and John Duncan—who printed articles and pieces that voiced Washington's view that black men should eschew politics and focus on more practical pursuits—themselves seemed to have fallen out due to political dissensions.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ For a history of the *Colored Citizen* see, "About the Colored Citizen," available online at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84036198/>.

¹¹⁰ *The New Age*, "Pertinent Facts Regarding Our Position," May 30, 1902, page 2. (accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹¹¹ *The New Age*, "What do They Want?" June 6, 1902, page 2. (accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

Though the two men chose to publish Washingtonian commentaries on the rashness of African Americans in politics, neither of the editors seemed to adhere to that piece of ideology. Dorsey and Duncan frequently reported on meetings where political matters of both local and national importance were heartily discussed. On occasion, all impartiality dissipated and the editors confidently declared which side of the argument to be superior.¹¹² As the year of 1902 wore on, the pages of the *New Age* featured more admonishments of the politics of its editor—and then—former editor, Chris Dorsey.

Dorsey worked as the valet to the “lesser” Copper King, Augustus Heinze.¹¹³ Heinze had come to Butte in 1889 and built his empire by refining the ore of smaller, privately owned mining operations at discounted prices. For this business model, which was in stark contrast to the cutthroat methods of William Clark, and the corporate nature of Marcus Daly’s Anaconda Company, Heinze became a favorite of the common people. In fact his popularity with the men of Butte was only overshadowed by his popularity with the women of Butte. Historians of Montana, Michael Malone and Richard Roeder, note that, “his talents included a fine oratorical ability, a shrewd sense of politics, and, so valuable to him in Butte, a glaring lack of moral scruples.”¹¹⁴ In the decade before the infamous campaigns of 1900, Heinze seemed to garner at least the latent approval of the black community, but in the late 1890s, the German copper magnate chose sides with the nativist Democrat William Clark. Together, the two men assailed the political

¹¹² *The New Age*, “Our Political Plot,” September 6, 1902. (accessed online at chronicleingamerica.loc.gov).

¹¹³ *The New Age*, “Heinze Changes Front,” July 12, 1902, page 4. (accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹¹⁴ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 221.

establishment of the Anaconda Company, Amalgamated Copper, and Standard Oil.¹¹⁵

During that process, Heinze embraced certain positions of the Democratic Party untenable to the black community—all except his personal valet and co-editor of the *New Age*, Chris Dorsey.

From the pages of the *New Age*, it seems that this new political affiliation and the black community's vocal assertion of political rights created an uncomfortable situation at a paper whose mission statement was to bring about a race free from petty dissensions. Throughout 1902, Dorsey campaigned and advocated for the positions of his employer amongst the black community in Butte and Helena.¹¹⁶ Those positions, however, showcase something unexpected about the politics of the black community in Butte around the turn of the century. Heinze was not himself running for office, nor, at this point, was he securing judges and city officials in Silver Bow Country. By 1902, Marcus Daly had died, William Clark had realigned with Amalgamated Copper and Standard Oil, and Heinze had been left alone to oppose the foreign corporate interests of the “the Company,” but did so with nearly total control of city and county politics.¹¹⁷ Instead, in 1901 and 1902, when Chris Dorsey defended the politics of his employer, the issues at large were entirely comprised of mining claims and mineral rights, not civic or social considerations.

The political discord between the once close friends and co-editors of the *New Age* was founded in the unique political environment that developed among the colonial

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 220-224.

¹¹⁶ *The New Age*, “Heinze Changes Front,” July 12, 1902, page 4. (accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹¹⁷ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 222.

sediments of Montana's settler society. Not able to garner a substantial enough voting block to truly hold politicians accountable or to propel their own candidates into office, black Montanans sought to carve out their political niche within the existing institution. They courted and supported local politicians and the unions that backed them, sometimes lending their voice and vote to Democrats. This contradiction between local and national politics was not lost on black Democrats. At a meeting of "Colored Democrats" in 1902 Butte, Aaron Webb acknowledged that "nationally, I am a Republican, but the local issues are the ones that concern us most, and I deem it quite essential that we look forward to the protection of our home industry, for this reason I am a Democrat."¹¹⁸ The decision of Webb, Dorsey, and other African Americans in Butte to support the party most closely associated with racist and nativist policies shows the uncharted environment in which black Montanans found themselves around the turn of the century.

In Montana, where the Washingtonian methods of social uplift met the realities of western society, political involvement on a corporate and local level was both a product of and a response to the incongruent relationship between black settlers and the settler society. For race leaders like Booker T. Washington, this level of engagement in local politics was not only the height of foolishness, but across the South, it often proved dangerous.¹¹⁹ Yet, the political controversies that isolated Dorsey from some in his own community in 1902 were the Davitt Mine and Minnie Healy cases, both dealing with

¹¹⁸ *The New Age*, "A Rousing Meeting," Saturday, October 25, 1902, Page 1.

¹¹⁹ Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 218-220.

veins of copper that ran between two claims.¹²⁰ Therefore, not only was the black community of Butte engaged in the social and civic politics on a national scale—as their statement of purpose indicated—but the Duncan-Dorsey dissension shows they were enmeshed and impassioned by local mining politics as well. If the goal was to secure a political voice for the black community of Butte at the turn of the century, embroilment in labor politics was essential. To disengage from local industrial or union politics in Montana was to resign one's fate of employment to the designs of the white community. However, even this proved to be a challenge as both local politicians and unions subverted the political agency that black Montanans sought to create for themselves—never allowing Washingtonian ideology a chance to flourish.

Though unions held an iron grip on the political arena in many towns—and an even tighter hold on their membership rolls—black Montanans recognized the need to agitate politically and engage the miners, unions, and management in places like Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls in order to secure the right to work.¹²¹ Success in this area was sparse, and often those black laborers who managed to secure jobs in refineries or other mining related operations did so without the support of the union, in the lowliest jobs, and at the lowest wages.¹²² Thus the black struggle in the Washingtonian West was two-fold. First, it was against the dominant white settler society. Second, it was against the dominant social ideology of black America at the time.

¹²⁰ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 222.

¹²¹ Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 14.

¹²² Frank Zogart, interview by Laurie Mercier, 11/18/82, Montana Historical Society Special Collections, OH 411, tape II, side A, 89-117.

Most of the political agitation evident in the archive of black Montana came in the form of race politics at the state and national level. Though Republican politics was a common theme of black papers across the nation, including those controlled by Washington and his interests, race men and women in Montana went to lengths not only to call out politicians in far removed places like Mississippi and Washington D. C., but also voiced virulent criticism of politicians in their own state, city, and ward. The history of political agitation in the South where African Americans levied complaints against their local leaders, sadly, often ended in violence and the reassertion of the color line.¹²³ For this reason, agitation carried strikingly different consequences in the two regions. Moreover, though most black Montanans voted the Republican ticket, it did not mean the community at large always toed the party line. In the racial contest between a white settler state and a small black community, black voters could not afford to submit to the policies of their party's leaders, as even Republican state, local, and national politics at times moved toward the erosion of the black community.

This reality was clearly shown when Joseph Bass, editor of the *Montana Plaindealer*, not only chastised politicians and city officials for pushing for prejudicial policies, but did so after previously supporting those very same men. In March of 1906, the *Plaindealer* ran a piece encouraging its readers to vote the Republican ticket for city officials in Helena, including the mayoral candidate, Frank Lindsay. In the below

¹²³ A number of excellent works touch on the violence that was engendered against politically active black southerners. For more, see Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm so Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998); Jerrold M. Packard, *American Nightmare: The History of Jim Crow* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

column, Bass elaborated on his position. "Let's endorse the principles of Republicanism as advocated by Theodore Roosevelt, and elect a Republican Mayor in Helena. The election of a Democratic Mayor is an indirect rebuke to President Roosevelt. As executive officers we want Republicans on guard."¹²⁴ Lindsay managed to win the office, in part with the help of the substantial black vote. However, as strong a proponent of Republicanism that Bass was, his ire could quickly turn on those he felt had forsaken those principles. In November of that same year, following the Brownsville Affair, President Roosevelt's character and moral scruples were called into question by Bass on the front page of the *Plaindealer*. Supposedly, several members of 25th Colored Infantry, along with other non-military personnel, fired shots in the town of Brownsville, Texas, killing a white man. Though it was reported that all the black men of the 25th were in their barracks at the time of the shooting, accusations against the soldiers persisted.¹²⁵ President Roosevelt's response was to dishonorably discharge the entire company after the presumed shooters would not step forward or be identified, citing their discharge on the grounds of participating in a conspiracy of silence.¹²⁶

The headline read: "Sentiment So Strong Against Dismissal Order of President Roosevelt."¹²⁷ The issues that followed in the months after were filled with sentiments that Roosevelt had rebuked his own party, and that he had forgotten the nobility and

¹²⁴ *Montana Plaindealer*, March 30, 1906, page 1.

¹²⁵ Report of the Inspector General of the Army, "The Brownsville Affray," in *The Black Military Experience in the American West*, ed. John. M. Carroll (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1971), 471-497.

¹²⁶ Report of the Inspector General of the Army, "The Brownsville Affray," in *The Black Military Experience in the American West*, ed. John. M. Carroll (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1971), 471-497.

¹²⁷ *Montana Plaindealer*, "Sentiment so Strong against Dismissal," November 23, 1906, page 1. (accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

courage of black soldiers generally. Bass summed up his feelings of a man on whom he once placed the hope of his race in as such,

President Roosevelt has lowered his dignity as a soldier and a statesman in the estimation of thousands of loyal Americans citizens. We cannot understand his attitude on the Negro question at this time. It seems that since his trip south he has joined hands with Southern rebels to continue the outrages on the Negro.¹²⁸

Many black papers across the country condemned Roosevelt's decision in similar fashion, yet for Bass, the willingness to agitate against his own party was not an outlying event, nor was it reserved for politicians far removed from the streets of Helena. Eventually, Mayor Frank Lindsay, too, would be the target Bass' political contempt during the legal saga of Helena's famed black social club, the Zanzibar.

The Zanzibar

From 1903 until 1906, Lloyd Vernon Graye enjoyed unparalleled material success for a black man in Montana's capital city of Helena. He owned a tailor's shop, from which he offered a variety of services including cleaning, hemming, and shoe shining. In addition, he engaged in a bevy of illicit and lucrative enterprises such as gambling and prostitution. But the crown jewel of his empire was the Zanzibar. In its broadest definition, the Zanzibar was a social club. Owned and operated by African Americans, its doors were open to everyone for its many functions. Graye's establishment not only offered saloon services, but also included a dance hall, live bands, café and diner, gymnasium, billiards, library, and an "oriental parlor." Its brick walls

¹²⁸ Ibid.

hunkered against the steep slope of Last Chance Gulch where Clore Street snaked along the western side of downtown.¹²⁹

The Zanzibar had opened in conjunction with the arrival in 1903 of several hundred black infantry men, stationed three miles to the west at Fort Harrison.¹³⁰ The soldiers, along with virtually all other elements of the black community, gathered at the Zanzibar for socializing, entertainment, romance, and sex. Young men could spend the day or evening dancing and listening to music with local girls, and for those men who tended to have more money than charm, options abounded for them as well. Even the more conservative citizens found reasons to patronize Graye's establishment. Reading clubs, society groups, and even a men's quartet used the Zanzibar as their home base.¹³¹

Historian William Lang, who wrote the first account of the unhappy story of the Zanzibar, emphasized the club's location along the infamous stretch of Clore Street. It was known as the home and hangout of many of the city's "Chinese elements," long seen as the center of the city's opium scene. In addition, it also encompassed part of Helena's red light district, and was home to several of the city's more seedy establishments. White city officials saw the Zanzibar not only as a contributing factor to the unruly nature of the area, but as its fulcrum. It was under these pretenses in 1906 that Jake Lisner, a city alderman, began his campaign to "clean up Clore Street."¹³²

¹²⁹ William Lang, "Tempest on Clore Street, Race and Politics in Helena, Montana, 1906," (Scratchgravel Hills Vol. 3, 1981), 12-13.

¹³⁰ Anthony Wood, "After the West was Won" *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 66:3 (Autumn 2016), 42.

¹³¹ "Eagle's Week at the Zanzibar," *The Montana Plaindealer*, June 15, 1906, Image 1. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹³² William Lang, "Tempest on Clore Street, Race and Politics in Helena, Montana, 1906," (Scratchgravel Hills Vol. 3, 1981), 12-13. For articles by Joseph Bass in the *Montana Plaindealer* see "The Famous Zanzibar-Pekin is no More," *The Montana Plaindealer*, January 4, 1907, Image 4. (Available

William Lang presented his history of the black social club and its demise as a product of one man's greed and prejudice against its flamboyant black owner. Surely Lloyd Vernon Graye was a rough and abrasive character. Joseph Bass made his feelings for Graye clear by calling him a hustler and a man of loose morals.¹³³ While prohibitionists and staunch Methodists such as Bass might decry his character, men such as Alderman Jake Lisner, Police Chief Bailey, and Mayor Frank Lindsey found other faults with Graye. His business had been operating for several years, and as Bass noted, was virtually no different from the clubs owned by Lisner himself only a few blocks away. Graye, in fact, was the competitor of several prominent white "gentlemen" within the city administration. Thus it might be easy to assume that the Zanzibar saga was merely that of a racially fueled business vendetta. However, several other factors, including the curious participation of Mayor Lindsay, should also be considered.

Lloyd Vernon Graye had created three important unifiers for the black population of Helena and Montana. First, he provided leisure: dancing, music, drink, relaxation, and sex. Second, he made a hub for black community identity outside the church. Finally, the Zanzibar cultivated a sense of place for the black community. These realities were not lost on the leaders of Helena and the city-council. The Zanzibar took on even more place-based qualities to white men like Lisner, Bailey, and Mayor Lindsey. From their vantage, Clore Street not only represented the establishment of blacks in Helena, but also of all unwanted ethnicities. While Lisner might have campaigned against the Zanzibar for

online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov), and "Tillman Methods Prevaileth Not," *The Montana Plaindealer*, June 29, 1906, Image 1. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹³³ "Tillman Methods Prevaileth Not," *The Montana Plaindealer*, June 29, 1906, Image 1. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

personal reasons—Graye’s inroads into the city’s realm of white prostitution threatened his own business prospects—the Zanzibar had come to represent more than Graye’s personal success.¹³⁴ It threatened many whites by symbolizing the vitality of the black community as a whole.

Lisner, Lindsay, and Bailey began a crusade of vitriol against Graye and the Zanzibar in 1906. At one point the *Helena Independent*, operating as the mouthpiece of the city officials, even printed crime statistics that suggested upwards of seventy percent of the city’s illegal activities spawned from the Zanzibar and Clore Street.¹³⁵ Those numbers were laughable and baseless; nevertheless, they served their purposes to cast the social club and the area as a scourge to the decency of white, middle-class Montanans. When two murders involving prostitutes from the club occurred in 1906, Lisner and Police Chief Bailey moved quickly to revoke the business license of Graye and his partner Aaron Gordon. However, since Graye and Gordon had committed no crime, the Zanzibar reopened, seemingly a sign of a great victory for African American liberties.¹³⁶ Sadly, the campaign to deprive Graye of his property, and more importantly the community of their place identity rebounded. In a year, charges were brought against Graye for selling alcohol to minors.¹³⁷ The courts ruled against the proprietors and, as Bass lamented in January 1907, “the maledictions of a coterie of pot-house politicians

¹³⁴ This was the estimation of Bass, who rested his assessment on the fact that Graye had become a pimp to white prostitutes and that they worked for him because he was an “object of [the women’s] desire...” See, “The Famous Zanzibar-Pekin is no More,” *The Montana Plaindealer*, January 4, 1907, Image 4. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹³⁵ Lang, “Tempest on Clore Street,” 12-13.

¹³⁶ “Tillman Methods Prevail Not,” *The Montana Plaindealer*, June 29, 1906, Image 1. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹³⁷ It is difficult to put the remarkable nature of such a charge in context for 1907 Helena. No doubt it was intended to be as snide and demeaning as possible.

and veritable negro-haters used an ungrateful and acrobatic city administration as a cat's paw to throttle L. V. Graye."¹³⁸

Those "veritable negro-haters" now also included the Mayor whom he had once supported. Bass did not shy away from conflict, an approach that would have likely led to repercussions had he lived in the South. However, as the saga of Zanzibar suggests, the color line in the West was not necessarily one found in politics, business, housing, or any of the typical social spheres, but in the structure of a white settler society that was working toward the black community's total erasure. Against such forces of erosion, race men and women like Bass, John and Armeta Duncan, and Chris Dorsey dissented in a distinctly western fashion. As anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler asserts, structures and systems of ruin and ruination do not create passive populations; instead they manifest an active struggle.¹³⁹

Conclusion

The incongruent relationship between black Montanans and the white settler society is revealed in the ideological paradox of the Washingtonian West. Westward expansion opened possibilities to black Americans that equated directly to several tenets of Booker T. Washington's teachings. The historical record shows that home ownership and education rates remained high in black Montana in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet at the very same time, the level of political agitation on every level from the members of the black community illustrate to what degree the promises of

¹³⁸ "The Famous Zanzibar-Pekin is no More," *The Montana Plaindealer*, January 4, 1907, Image 4. (Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

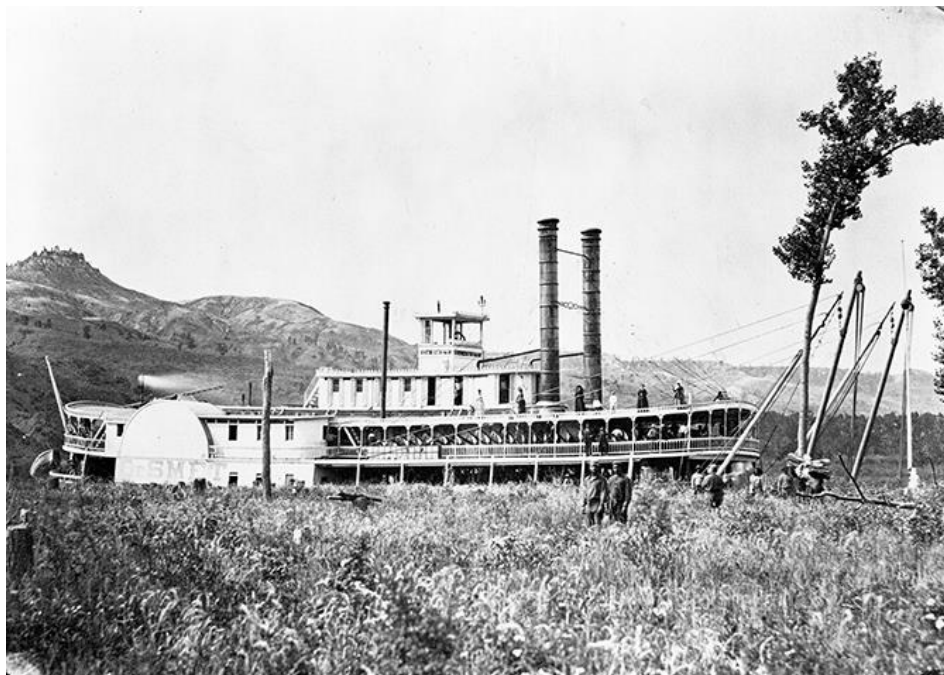
¹³⁹ Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris*, 29.

uplift ideology were under siege from the rest of society. The Washingtonian West was therefore not solely representative of either Booker Washington's or W. E. B. Du Bois' ideals, but a hybrid ideology that formed to meet new challenges.

The African American community mobilized its political agency through various means, methods, and party platforms in the early twentieth century. Strict Republicans and followers of Booker T. Washington like Joseph Bass not only engaged in political discourses in ways that Washington consistently warned against, but black Republicans also publically voiced their disdain for their party representatives who they viewed to be no better than the malicious racists of the Jim Crow South. Likewise, black men like Aaron Webb and Chris Dorsey advocated for labor interests and Democrats that denied them the right to organize and, in Butte, to work in the mines at all. Trapped between the ineffectiveness of being a small and oppressed political voice, Republican politicians who consistently acted against their interests, and fickle, fractious industry politics, the Washingtonian West, too, became fractured and isolated.

Moreover, this unique contradiction in ideological mores was itself a regional occurrence. This western strand of black social ideology followed men and women who encountered racism different from that of other geographical regions. They advocated for rights and liberties that would strengthen the black community against the violation of a most basic right, to call a place home. Political dissent by African Americans on a number of issues, including mining politics, union membership, national race news, and local and state policies, represent the active struggle of the Western black community against the whitening of the West. Yet even as the black community fought an uphill

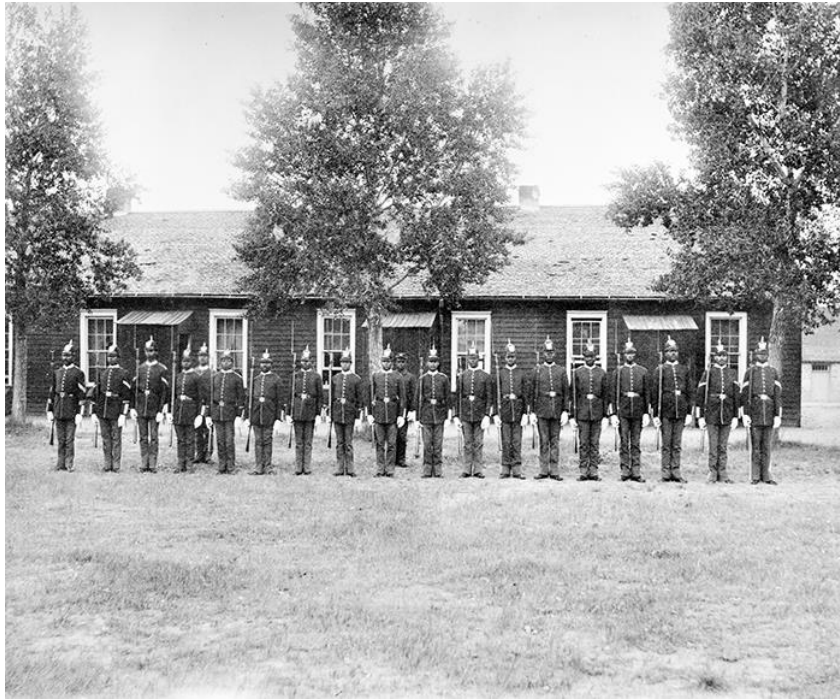
battle to engage with their fellow white Montanans on a civic level, many black Montanans continued to search for activities that ordained their participation with a deep cultural and social belonging. Convening with Nature under the Big Sky carried almost spiritual connotations for many. Black Montanans, too, were intent on entering the most sacred of cultural altars: the wilderness.



(Fig 1.1) African American men on board the steamboat DeSmet, along the banks of the Missouri River at Ft. Benton. Likely late 19th century. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, PAc 74-15.5



(Fig 1.2) African American man & covered wagons, Ravalli & St. Ignatius, late 19th century. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, 957-881



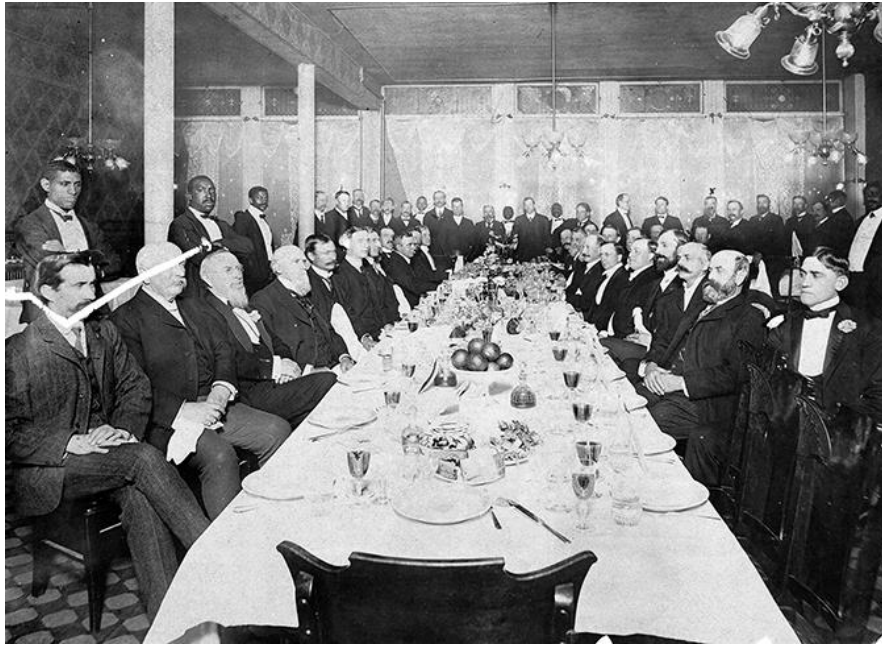
(Fig 1.3) Group photograph of African-American 25th Infantry (partial company) Ft. Shaw, 1890. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, 947-375



(Fig 1.4) 10th Regiment Cavalry "Buffalo Soldiers" in formation at parade ground, gambrel-roofed two story houses (est.) in background, Fort Custer near the Yellowstone River, prob. 1892-1896. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, 947-226



(Fig 1.5) William C. Irvin, likely the first black policeman in Montana, wearing his Odd-Fellows Uniform, comprised of a hat with the I.O.O.F. links decorating the front of his suit. Helena, ca.1890. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, 957-597



(Fig 1.6) Group photograph of Eighth Montana Legislature members (all white men) seated at long banquet table prior to dinner, behind the legislators stand approximately 10 unidentified African- American male waiters. Helena 1903. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, Eighth Montana Legislature File.



(Fig 1.7) Black chauffeur in touring car at Hill Park, Helena, ca. 1915. The following year, the Daughters of the Confederacy's Helena Chapter erected the Confederate Fountain near the top right of the photo. It was removed in 2017. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, PAC 74-104.352GP



(Fig 1.8) Teenage classmates in Helena on the steps of the school, ca. 1910. The sole African American student stands in the fourth row on the left with her hair pulled back. Helena's schools had been desegregated since 1882. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, PAc 74-104.50GP



(Fig 1.9) Queen Anne style house with irregular roof line, stick style porch, picket-type fence, home of African-American Norman Howard, 1003 Ninth Avenue, Helena, ca. 1895. Research photo archives of the Montana Historical society, PAc 79-53



(Fig 1.10) Masthead of *The New Age*, printed by John Duncan and Chris Dorsey, Butte, 1902. Image from chroniclingamerica.com



(Fig 1.11) Masthead of *The Montana Plaindealer* edited by Joseph Bass, Helena, 1906-1912. Image from chroniclingamerica.com

(Fig 1.12) Page from *The Montana Plaindealer*, 1907, decrying the closure of the Zanzibar Club, Helena. Image from chroniclingamerica.com

CHAPTER THREE

THINKING WITH MAGPIES:
 THE BLACK WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE AND
 THE LOGIC OF SETTLEMENT IN MONTANA'S CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Claude Leví-Strauss famously suggested that any number of things are “good to think with.” With this in mind, William Cronon, the environmental historian of the American West, wrote, speaking of Marsha Weisiger’s book *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, that sheep, too, were good to think with. Using Strauss’ axiom he said, “a rock is never just a rock, a tree a tree, a cow a cow.”¹⁴⁰ None of these objects or animals stands on its own. Each weighs heavy with meaning humans heap upon it. Likewise, as Raymond Williams observed, “the idea of Nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history.”¹⁴¹ That is, the natural world, in its various constructions and definitions, is not immutably removed from the problems of people’s lives, however remote and foreign it may seem. Human interaction with Nature on nearly every level is couched in the social experiences people carry with them. As a dominant social issue of the early twentieth century in Montana, Nature inevitably was both understood and to some extent, experienced through a racialized lens.

In the early twentieth century, ornithologists in Montana began noticing a significant change in the behavior of the black-billed magpie (*Pica pica hudsonia*).

¹⁴⁰ William Cronon, “Sheep Are Good to Think With,” forward in Marsha Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2009), ix.

¹⁴¹ Raymond Williams, “Ideas of Nature,” in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 67.

Whereas the black and white bird had traditionally fed on insects, small mammals, eggs, and carrion, a biologist named Sherlin Stillman Berry observed a series of fatal attacks on newly sheared sheep in Wheatland County, Montana during the summer of 1912. His findings—published a decade later in *Condor*, the journal of the American Ornithological Society—recounted the tortured demise of several rams. With shearing scars fresh on their back, the sheep unexpectedly attracted flocks of magpies that began tearing and pecking at the docile livestock until loss of blood and shock overcame them. Noting that this behavior was unlike anything “old timers” in the area had ever seen, Berry made several claims. He suggested that the onslaught was being led and initiated by several individual birds that were increasingly aggressive. He also maintained that his conclusions on the new relationship that had developed between magpies and livestock had continued during the preceding decade from 1912 until the time of publishing his article in 1922. In short, magpies had changed from something commonplace and familiar on the landscape, to a terrorizing, unpredictable force of nature, no longer compatible with civilization.¹⁴²

What makes this piece of ornithology so significant in Montana’s natural and social history is the unexpected clarity with which it also articulated key moments of human and social processes. The author’s prefacing paragraph is disquieting in light of a settler colonial perspective. Berry begins, “civilized man extends his domain into a hitherto unoccupied region, as he has done in the case of much of the territory of our western states.” Already operating under the settler premise that land is free and for the

¹⁴² S. Stillmen Berry, “Magpies versus Livestock: An Unfortunate New Chapter in Avian Depredations,” *The Condor* 24:1 (Jan-Feb, 1922), 13-17.

taking, Berry turns his attention to mitigating the fact that on this “unoccupied” land are many species that were already occupying it.¹⁴³

In Berry’s estimation, the inferior inhabitants have only but a handful of paths to take in the face of the unrelenting conquest of the white settler. “Some of these,” he writes of the plants and animals, “never recover from their first reverses and sink rapidly into extinction.” Others, he supposes, are only in the process of an ultimately hopeless battle for survival, while some will manage to cohabitate with humans without having to change much at all. But it is the way that Berry defines the fourth category of animal that illustrates what role the magpie, and all magpie-like creatures, play in the new world of the settler. In his estimation, these animals counter adapt to the environment of the white settler, holding their own to the great displeasure of “the omnipotent man.”¹⁴⁴ In the new settler state of Montana, Berry understood that magpies were in the process of carving out an environmental niche for themselves in a human environment.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Here Berry also draws our attention to the fact that colonial spaces are always defined in part by their potentiality. By recognizing that the land has certain native species living on it, Berry underscores what must be removed or changed so that land can meet its “potential.” This discussion touches on issues explored by Frieda Knobloch in her study, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West*. Knobloch focuses keenly on the genealogy of both “agriculture” and “colony”, arguing that the two terms share deep ideological roots. Knobloch “presents components of western American agriculture with an eye to the colonial purposes that inform them.” Magpies in a material sense, and black westerners in a social sense, do not adhere to the imagined potential of the colony. Knobloch’s chapter on weeds is especially pointed to this dynamic, and suggests that Raymond Williams’ assertion that the natural and social worlds inhabit one another is a useful frame for this history. See, Frieda Knobloch, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ S. Stillman Berry, “Magpies versus Livestock: An Unfortunate New Chapter in Avian Depredations,” *The Condor* 24:1 (Jan-Feb, 1922), 13.

¹⁴⁵ The drought of 1917 in Montana had widespread environmental and social repercussions. The boom of the homesteading economy proliferated the number of occupants on Montana’s prairies. As Sherlin Stillman Berry so keenly suggested in 1922, such an expansion had inevitable consequences on the ecosystem. He made his observations at a time when the state was reeling from mass population loss and homestead failures. Even as Berry recognized the biological realities of intensive farming on a natural landscape, he maintained that aggressive magpie behaviors like attacking sheep was likely the result of individual birds’ violent proclivities, rather than being the natural of all magpies.

In 1921, another early conservationist, Myron S. Carpenter also spoke to the settler mindset of magpies in Montana.¹⁴⁶ The secretary of the State Sportsmen Association made his plea to Montanans in the pages of several state papers.¹⁴⁷ “Mr. Carpenter,” wrote the *Powder River Country Examiner*, “is urging the sportsmen of the state to carry on an energetic campaign for the destruction of the common enemies of game birds and animals. It is well known that the magpie, so numerous in Montana, is very destructive to the game, song and insectivorous birds.”¹⁴⁸ With this call to arms, Carpenter and the various gun and rod clubs under the umbrella of his State Sportsman Association cast the black and white bird as being a pest and nuisance, but moreover a poor steward to its environment.¹⁴⁹ Carpenter draws attention to the fact that magpies behaved as they did not because “civilization” had encroached on their habitat, but instead because magpies and other members of the corvid family were actually

¹⁴⁶ Myron Carpenter, the editor of the Three Forks News and Belgrade Journal, came up among a generation of conservationists that leaned heavily upon the belief that species like the magpie could be controlled and selected for extermination to ensure the survival of others. This species-centered approach would in time give way to an ecosystem-centered understanding, but remained prevalent in the early twentieth century. Tom Stout, ed., *Montana, Its Story and Biography: A History of Aboriginal and Territorial Montana and Three Decades of Statehood*, vol. II, (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1921); Also see “Lessons for Living: Irving Fisher, National Vitality, and Human Conservation,” in Ian Tyrell, *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt’s America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). 173-188.

¹⁴⁷ Carpenter was unique in Montana at the time. While conservation values such as his own typically followed the political leadership of former president Theodore Roosevelt and thus leaning Republican, Carpenter was described by historians of his day as “a staunch Democrat,” whose career included a run for the state legislature. Interestingly, this was a marked change from his early career in business in Wisconsin where he was a well-known Republican. Though his move west in 1911 began his life as a journalist, sportsman, conservationist, and Democrat. Tom Stout, ed., *Montana, Its Story and Biography: A History of Aboriginal and Territorial Montana and Three Decades of Statehood*, vol. II (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1921),

¹⁴⁸ “Carpenter Makes Plea for Wild Lands in Our Mountains,” *Powder River County Examiner*, April 29, 1921. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

exceedingly well suited to the new, human environment—a relationship that did not fit schema of a settler colonial ontology.¹⁵⁰

Magpies as Black

Earlier in the nineteenth century, the wholesale destruction of desired bird species across the country, not unlike the debate in Montana, cast blame on several human groups, including poorer blacks. In her study, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*, Dorceta Taylor chronicles the ire directed towards women and minorities for the destruction of birds for purposes of both millinery fashion and subsistence hunting. Unscrupulous populations of Italians, Eastern Europeans, and African Americans were believed to hunt various desirable birds to extinction across the South.¹⁵¹ Both African Americans and magpies drew blame for the loss of specific species of desired birds. The violence that characterized the magpie/human relationship suggests that a settler colonial lens might yet provide new and useful insights.¹⁵² This analytical frame allows one to enter the mind of the settler colonist and understand how colonial ontology—what this thesis has called the logic of settlement—played out in both the social and natural environment of Montana in the early twentieth century.

¹⁵⁰ For a similar argument regarding the cultivation of the Great Plains region, see, Geoff Cunfer, *On the Great Plains: Agriculture and Environment* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2006), 16.

¹⁵¹ Dorceta Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*, 211.

¹⁵² Jon Coleman discusses a very similar relationship in his work on wolves. In *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*, Coleman argues that colonization played a significant role in how humans and wolves interacted. As humans relied upon livestock to succeed in both extractive and settler colonizing projects, wolves' understandable adaptation to the new environment human created a circumstance in which "wolves symbolized the frustration and anxieties of colonization, and the canines paid in blood for their utility as metaphors." I suggest that magpies also represent the complexity, frustration, and anxiety of settler colonial processes. See, Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 11.

As Justin Leroy has argued, the settler colonial project not only expands by making its victims Native—as one can see from the Berry’s positioning of the magpie against the white settler—but also by making them, in effect, black.¹⁵³ While magpies are in fact native to Montana and much of the West, newspapers and popular culture would also reimagine magpies as black. Culturally, these poaching birds took on new meanings across the United States as tricksters, chatty hoodlums, and even ambiguously racialized cartoons in the 1930s. Yet seemingly by chance, the racialization of poaching birds appeared in a Montana newspaper, the *Western News* in 1907, precisely at the time when the black community was fighting for its own survival in the state. “The West Indian Negro is a born poacher.”¹⁵⁴ The article below this headline went on to explain the devious and unsporting ways that black West Indians snared their prey such as putting cayenne pepper in bird baths, catching them when they went blind, or blasting fish from the stream with dynamite. This short piece depicts those of African descent as poachers, tricksters, and poor stewards of their natural world. A stark similarity appears in the magpie discourse that was ongoing in Montana for decades. Magpies, too, were seen as antithetical to the settler colonial project of raising crops and livestock. Paralleling this, African Americans were outside of the colonial schema of who could be a settler, and engage in the ensuing settler society.

Such a web of seemingly disconnected sources and events in Montana’s past may first appear to have little to do with imperial formations, social relations, or the African

¹⁵³ See introduction, and, Justin Leroy, “Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism” *Theory and Event* 19:4 (2016), 2.

¹⁵⁴ “West Indian Negroes,” *The Western News* (Stevensville, Montana), October 23, 1907, page 7. Available online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

American experience. Yet by bringing the archives of conservation history, the history of the environment, and racialized colonial processes together, a valuable narrative in the history of black Montana comes into focus. The magpie discourse is, in one sense, a material and environmental history, engaged in a struggle between biological adaptations and a human way of thinking that drew heavily on their understanding of the world as one dominated by the laws and logic of settlement. In another sense, magpies are allegorical to how white settlers conceived of African Americans who took advantage of new western spaces by reimagining and affecting change in tangible ways in the settler society, such as the previous two chapters have argued. Thus it is no surprise that magpies and poaching birds that display certain corvid-esque behaviors were racialized not as Indians—who competed for the same land and resources but would inevitably lose out (at least in the settlers’ estimation)—but as black, whom white settlers looked on with increased anxiety as the African American community pushed toward remaking the region into their *Golden West*.

Of course black Montanans were not magpies, and the anxieties that gripped white settlers could not be satiated by such brutal methods of erasure that were used against pesky birds. Nor were black Montanans indigenous peoples, whom white settlers had been engaged in a slow, genocidal conflict of elimination for the previous century. This chapter will focus on the setting of magpie history and allegory—Montana’s early conservation movement—to explore how conservationism’s racial and colonial foundations led to the occlusion of African American participation in the movement. Moreover, this process of occlusion intentionally withheld a vital marker of social

belonging, Montana's wilderness and conservation ethic, from black Montanans. Finally, this chapter reconstructs the history that has been eroded from cultural memory—the origins and reality of the black wilderness experience. This chapter subverts the settler myths of white possession and a white wilderness insofar as it unearths the participation and agency of black Montanans in *every* stage of the human/nature experience that served as the very foundation of the movement to protect and conserve the natural environment and its resources. In this and other ways, black Montanans actively complicated the settler colonial narrative.

An Unsegregated Wilderness

Thinking with magpies reveals the degree to which the logic of settlement colored the way that white Montanans interacted with, and related to, both the natural and the social world in the early twentieth century. In this way, the conservation movement also grew up among the sedimented legacies of settler colonialism. Conservationists' understanding of the natural world, be it the mountains, rivers, plants, or animals, including the magpie, was wedded to the violent process of appropriation that deprived those mountains, rivers, plants, and animals from the Native peoples of Montana. The history of the conservation movement, therefore, is subject to the colonial erosion that shaped the very way that people think about conservation. Historians such as Louis Warren and Ian Tyrrell have argued that conservationism was, at its core, a white, middle and upper class phenomena that in part worked to separate them from the "lower sorts." Yet as Richard White has argued, its origins are firmly placed in the labor and leisure that these "lower sorts" had previously experienced in the natural world. For this reason, the

history of African Americans' relationship with the environment should be reexamined precisely because a narrative of black participation in Montana's conservation movement does not exist. The deliberate erosion of the black trapper, outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman, camper, picnicker, or tourist from the narrative of the nature or wilderness experience that predated and initiated the conservation movement—like white Montanans' response to the magpie—suggests that such an occlusion follows conservationism's inherent settler colonial logic.¹⁵⁵

Montanans have long held up their ties to the land and self-appointed role as wardens to their natural surroundings as an intrinsic characteristic of what it means to be a Montanan. Yet at the turn of the century, nearly half of all Montanans did not live exclusively on the edges of civilization, but in the state's cities and towns.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the abundance of public, easily accessible land fostered an intense relationship between humans and nature in Montana even within the urban community. Though cultural perceptions might imply otherwise, the experience of confronting nature

¹⁵⁵ The discipline of environmental history, influenced by the scholarship of William Cronon and others, has increasingly argued that the history of humans and the natural world is more complicated than it may first appear. The nature of Nature itself refuses to yield unifying questions and answers for those historians seeking to articulate our place within it. Instead we find Nature and Wilderness, and other important points of social and cultural contact to be constructed ideas instead of any immutable reality. Bearing this in mind, the complexity of African American environmental history requires vigilant attention to a plethora of factors and circumstances. See, William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 69-89; also see, Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980). And, Richard White, "Are You an Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?" in, William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996) 176.

¹⁵⁶ In 1910, 64.5% of Montana's population was rural—or living in a town of 2,500 people or less. Following the drought of 1917-1918, the crash of the homesteading boom, and the subsequent state-wide depression in the 20s and 30s, the rural population dropped to 56.3% after World War II. For census information on Montana Populations 1900-1950, see U.S. Census Information, "Number of Inhabitants: Montana," Available online at <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/15276180v2p26ch1.pdf>

was just as important for the black community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵⁷ The beginning of African Americans in the wild spaces of Montana was concurrent with the first white explorers. Clark's enslaved body servant York was the first black man to see the world that would be called Montana in its pre-colonial state, though his very presence there initiated the first movement toward the later settler society.

Richard White argued that the "first white man" myth heavily influenced subsequent generations' engagement in the environment. The first white man supposedly labored in the pristine wilderness untouched by humans until that moment.¹⁵⁸ Of course, virtually no place where the first white men toiled in North America was truly untouched by indigenous game or resource management processes. For example, George Bird Grinnell, in his 1891 surveys of what would become Glacier National Park, recounted how the Flathead and Blackfeet burned tracks of land to facilitate hunting and food collection.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, the first non-native explorers in a given area were not always white. White notes that figures such as York or Metis trappers are passed by in favor of Lewis and Clark and Daniel Boone as the historic white men whose labor comes to be mimicked by the leisure of the modern environmentalist.

¹⁵⁷ For two representative studies on black urbanism, and conversely, the black rural and outdoors experience, see Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); and, Khalil Gibran, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹⁵⁸ Richard White, "Are You an Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?" in, William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996) 176.

¹⁵⁹ Madison Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park, Montana* (Washington D. C.: Washington Government Printing Office, Department of the Interior, 1919), 6.

For the black community in Montana, the first wilderness experience was not one of leisure, but of labor. For early Montanans, the “first white man” myth was heavily influenced by Jim Bridger, who trapped beaver in the Rocky Mountains starting in the 1830s. Yet few recall that Bridger’s partner and friend Jim Beckwourth, whose run-ins with various native tribes in Western Montana are just as mythic and fantastic in scope, was himself a black man.¹⁶⁰ The two men’s escapades, which have since trickled down into the generic ideal of the western frontiersmen of the northern Rockies, were the model for later sportsmen seeking that “authentic” masculine frontier experience. From the earliest era of non-indigenous habitation of Montana, African Americans too have played a role in the construction of the bond between man and nature.

Even as the use of Nature shifted toward hunting or camping for leisure, black Montanans continued to look to their own community for examples of wilderness savvy. During the Buffalo Soldier era, black troops spent a great deal of time beyond the compounds of forts, out on the high line and Rocky Mountain Front. Their wilderness acumen and ability to rough it in service roles have long stood as a challenge to the contemporary stereotype of black urbanism. The Buffalo Soldiers specifically have been the topic of interest to those studying the history of the National Parks.¹⁶¹ The 10th

¹⁶⁰ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 50-52.

¹⁶¹ In the creation of Montana’s Glacier National Park the fundamental causation for setting aside of what George Bird Grinnell famously called the Crown of the Continent was first and foremost a project in native land appropriation. In the *Early History of Glacier National Park* written by the conservationist and eugenicist Madison Grant, the author tells how Grinnell first suggested the federal government set aside the western forested range of the Blackfeet reservation for future resource management and a possible national park, arguing that the tribe “did not use that land.” (Madison Grant, *Early History of Glacier National Park, Montana*, 1919, 5.) Not only did the conservation ideology of Grinnell and others stem from a particular kind of relationship with nature, but that relationship also expressed a particular kind of relationship between indigenous populations and the dominant settler society. Historian Mark David Spence has also commented on the insidious origins of National Parks in his work *Dispossessing the*

Calvary took on the mantle as the first rangers of Yosemite National Park in the early days of federal management. Likewise in Montana, where the presence of the Buffalo Soldier at the turn of the century was strongest, Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks hosted black troops in various circumstances.¹⁶²

The founding of Yellowstone in 1872, nearly two decades before the deployment of black troops to Montana, led to several government surveys of the vast parkland. At least one of the early explorers for the federal government was a black man named Walker Browning. Browning, who had lived and mined in Deadwood, South Dakota and worked the rails in Fort Laramie, Wyoming, continued his life in the wilds of the West after he took part in an expedition of Yellowstone in 1873. Likely the only black man in the expeditionary force, Browning worked as a cook for Hayden's company throughout the summer. Following his time in the park, Browning moved his family to the fledgling town of Billings, where the black community grew around his home at 106 South 26th Street. In the decades that followed, Browning not only became the geographic center of

Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Spence shows that the primary concern of the military control of both Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks—in which buffalo soldiers participated—was focused on the frictions of Indian inhabitants, leading to their eventual removal. Likewise, Pacific and Settler Colonial scholars have also explored this relationship. See Tracey Banivanua Mar, “Carving Wilderness: Queensland’s National Parks and the Unsettling of Wmptied Lands, 1890-1910,” in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place, and Identity*, eds., Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 73-94.

¹⁶² See, Bruce A. Glasrud, and Michael N. Searles. *Buffalo Soldiers in the West a Black Soldiers Anthology*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007); Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1971); Theodore Harris, ed. *Negro Frontiersman: The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, First Negro Graduate of West Point* (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1963); Alexandra V. Koelle, “Pedaling on the Periphery: The African American Twenty-Fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps and the Roads of American Expansion,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 41:3 (2010), 305–26; Ann Lane, *The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction*. Port Washington (N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971); Frank Schubert, ed. *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1995); Anthony Wood, “After the West Was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth-Century Montana,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 66:3 (Autumn 2016) 36-50.

the black community—which came to include several buffalo soldiers and their families, such as the renowned cavalry captain Horace Bivens—but he also was revered as a pillar and pioneer of the Billings community as a whole by whites and blacks alike. Though only a janitor, Browning served in various religious, civic, and political leadership positions—multiple times being elected as a member of the Republican convention in Billings alongside prominent white men such as rancher and land developer Peter Yegan. Browning’s life in so many ways exemplified the ideal of the black westerner, an image that, in his case, translated into social prominence. At the time of his death, his origins as a gold miner, rail worker, and wilderness explorer were not merely a curious note by his friends and family, but a point of pride for the black community of Billings.¹⁶³

Black soldiers and civilians alike were often among the first non-natives to venture into vast tracks of federal land in Montana and the West. General Wesley Merritt and his company were led deep into Glacier National Park by members of the 10th Cavalry who were stationed nearby at Fort Assiniboine. Images of the soldiers camping along the banks of St. Mary’s Lake are among the only pieces of evidence of Merritt’s expedition in 1894.¹⁶⁴ In 1897, twenty-four members of the 9th Cavalry accompanied the conservationist William Seward Webb’s excursion into Yellowstone and what would become Grand Teton National Park. Webb had been a part of an 1879 expedition to survey possible expansions of Yellowstone, and continued to travel west to hunt in the

¹⁶³ “Walker Browning Obituary” Billings Gazette, Feb 8th 1925. Accessed at ancestry.com.

¹⁶⁴ “Photographic print of African-American 10th Cavalry escorts to General Merritt's party, St. Mary's, 1894,” 957-993, Photo Archives, Montana Historical Society Research Center, accessed online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch/MHSCollections>.

years following. While Webb hired the famed trapper “Beaver Dick” Leigh to lead the foray, the expertise of the black scouts and outdoorsmen were no less vital.¹⁶⁵

As the settler project in the West advanced, and the wild spaces shifted from the unknown into destinations of recreation and leisure, black Montanans, like whites, partook of the wilderness experience. Richard White notes that the modern environmentalist movement, beginning in the early twentieth century, was characterized by leisure coming to mimic the labor of an earlier generation that lived off the land.¹⁶⁶ When examining the black leisure experience in the wild, then, it is important to remember the toiling of York, Jim Beckwourth, and the Buffalo Soldiers. It must be entertained that stories of black Montanans venturing into the backcountry, some of which the local newspapers reported to last two full weeks, suggest the possibility that such outings mimicked Jim Beckwourth’s or the Buffalo Soldiers’ wilderness escapades, and not Lewis and Clark or John Bozeman.¹⁶⁷ Further, not only did African Americans enjoy the outdoors, but that they had expended the time and resources to do so. In this example, a two-week camping trip would have counted as a most ambitious outing in 1902, or in any era. Such trips necessarily required both the material infrastructure such as tents, packs, horses, mules, and other implements to accomplish safely. The continued presence of such expeditions as well as single day excursions in the pages of black

¹⁶⁵ “Photographic print of African-American 9th Cavalry members & other W.S. Webb excursion members at ‘Beaver Dick’s’ tepee, 1896,” H-3715, Photo Archives, Montana Historical Society Research Center, accessed online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch/MHSCollections>.

¹⁶⁶ Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?” in, William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 176.

¹⁶⁷ *The Butte New Age*, July 4, 1902, page 4.

newspapers highlights the understated importance of nature in the everyday lives of black Montanans.¹⁶⁸

Moving past the typical images of men hunting, fishing, and camping in the wilderness, the most frequent modes of outdoor recreation suggest that nature played an important role in the community—not just men adhering to social codes of masculinity. In a 1926 photograph, a dozen black women in white sundresses posed for a picture at the Pleasant Hour Club’s picnic in Colorado Gulch near Helena.¹⁶⁹ Images such as this illustrate the unexpected ways in which Montana’s natural environment intertwined with African American cultural life. Often because the community had very few buildings big enough to hold large group meetings (which were a frequent occurrence), many society, fraternal, and literary clubs chose to meet in public picnic areas, pavilions, and campgrounds. This intersection of the natural and social within the larger American experience is indicative of what partially led to the beginnings of the national conservation movements, origins in which African Americans participated.

The Methods of Colonial Occlusion: Moses in the Wilderness or Adam in the Garden?

Despite the evidence of the black wilderness or natural experience in the West, a fundamental disconnect existed in the minds of many white and black Americans living outside the western reaches of the country concerning the overall relationship between African Americans and Nature. Compounding this incongruence, black Americans have

¹⁶⁸ For examples of newspaper notes on African Americans in Nature, see *The Butte New Age*, July 4, 1902; August 9, 1902; August 24, 1902; *Montana Plaindealer*, July 12, 1907.

¹⁶⁹ “Group photographs of the Pleasant Hour Club picnic, Colorado Gulch, 1926,” PAC 2002-36.10-11, Photo Archives, Montana Historical Society Research Center, accessed online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch/MHSCollections>.

largely been socially dispossessed of the land. Historian Mark Stoll contemplated black environmentalism from the perspective of the eastern and southern experience:

Africa has come to represent the Promised Land for African Americans. This view results from an alienation of a landless race from the land, and therefore from the land-myths that have animated European Americans from Jamestown and Plymouth Rock to the modern environmental movement. This land was *not* their land... it is certainly true that nowhere in this country have African Americans felt a pride of full possession, of mythic origins tied to the soil, of confidence in a divine destiny manifest in the land itself, such as is symbolized for whites by Plymouth Rock, Yosemite Valley, or even Stone Mountain.¹⁷⁰

Stoll's assertion that, "nowhere in this country have African Americans felt a pride of full possession"—while recognizing the eventual reality in places like Montana and the West—is challenged by the record of the black wilderness experience of the region. Stoll himself acknowledges that for a moment, the "Promised Land had other metaphorical meanings for African Americans," such as Kansas and Oklahoma as Free states during the Exodusters, and later, western cities.¹⁷¹ And while it would be difficult to argue that black Montanans truly enjoyed what he calls full possession, it cannot be denied that they did enjoy full participation, and engaged in an experience that not only drew on white, but also black mythic characters and origin stories in the West. Thus, the question that arises from the interplay between the scholarship of African American Environmental history and the archive of black Montana is: How does the black wilderness experience fade from public memory? From this perspective, Stoll's assertion that there is no place of full possession for the black community with regards to Nature or

¹⁷⁰ Mark Stoll, "Religion and Environmental Activism," in *"To Love the Wind and the Rain:" African Americans and Environmental History*, Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, eds., (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2006), 160.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 160.

Wilderness is in some ways accurate. Because of this Stoll also argues that “[t]he great monuments of black sacred history are human, not natural, and the dominant metaphor has been Moses in the wilderness, not Adam in the garden.”¹⁷² Yet the historical interaction of black Montanans and Nature does not fit Stoll’s narrative of outright absence. Instead, the legacy of the conservation movement is not one that prohibited blacks from partaking of the wilderness experience. Rather, it is a legacy of white upper class narratives, mythic origins, and, at times, overtly racist undercurrents that eroded the memory of the black man and women from the foundations of the conservation movement.

The Conservation of Races and the Erosion of the Black Wilderness

A subset of individuals propagated both the tenets of conservation and eugenics, fed by blatant white supremacy. New York banker Madison Grant, U.S. Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot, and businessman Charles Goethe all epitomized the quintessential model of environmentalism’s most unseemly champions. Although individuals like Grant or Pinchot represented but a fraction of either group, their concentration at the pinnacle of influence for both conservation and eugenics in the early twentieth century should not be overlooked. In the national arena, Grant, Goethe, and Pinchot stand out as the era’s most famous naturalists, as well as members of various eugenicists groups, in addition to being outspokenly racist against those people deemed of a “lower power.”¹⁷³ Though these

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ A wealth of sources explore the intersection of preservation and eugenics, with specific attention being paid to Charles Goethe and Madison Grant. Early works such as Susan Schrepfer’s *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978*, published in 1983 spends much of the early chapters addressing the impact that eugenicist ideology might have had on the nation’s

movements may seem to have existed on opposite ends of the political spectrum, several factors led to a small group of progressives embracing both.¹⁷⁴ Historian and biologist Garland Allen noted that for such individuals, “eugenics and conservation were intertwined by both vision and methodology.”¹⁷⁵ The goals and methods of natural resource conservation, wilderness preservation, and wildlife management fit a similar continuum of methods for programs of “race betterment.”

The fictitious image of the sturdy Nordic was heavily influenced by notions that communing with unadulterated nature would refresh and rehabilitate a deteriorating race. In addition, the wilderness provided the proving ground in which whiteness would be refined, both physically and spiritually. Allen writes that, “For both Grant and Goethe, Nature (with a capital “N”) had moral lessons to teach.”¹⁷⁶ For such men, Nature was the ultimate arbitrator of the moral laws of the universe, and that the truth of that morality would be exposed through the refinement of the superior and the elimination of the inferior.¹⁷⁷ Therefore the participation in the wilderness or nature experience was both a refinement of one’s (usually a man’s) moral and physical self, but also an activity that laid claim to moral and racial superiority. Within the context of the settler colonial West

leading conservationists. Alexandria Stern’s work, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, on the rise of eugenics in the socio-political climate of California in the early twentieth century could almost double as a history of early conservationists.

¹⁷⁴ If we recall the life of the Montana conservationist Myron S. Carpenter, it is curious that the man was described as a “staunch democrat.” Like eugenics and conservation, the politics of the early twentieth century democratic party and conservationism too fall somewhat far apart on the spectrum of policy. Most conservationists were republicans or progressives. Yet, like Grant or Pinchot, we find a strange connection between party, or social politics and environmentalism. While his position on issues like eugenics cannot be known at this date, his staunch democratic proclivities should not be completely disregarded when considering his campaign against the magpie.

¹⁷⁵ Gerald Allen, “Culling the Herd’: Eugenics and the Conservation Movement in the United States, 1900-1940,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 46:1 (Spring 2013), 59.

¹⁷⁶ Gerald Allen, “Culling the Herd’: Eugenics and the Conservation Movement in the United States, 1900-1940,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 46:1 (Spring 2013), 65.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

generally, and Montana specifically, whitewashing the wilderness experience affirmed the connection this small but influential group made between race and nature, and thus, their racial superiority. The ideology which, began as the musings of social Darwinists who metaphorically considered themselves the equivalent of the mighty but dwindling Redwoods, while the debased masses were akin to the magpie, inevitably trickled down into the broader public perception of the relationship between communities of color and the environment.

Du Bois has a great deal to say on this issue in his 1897 essay, “The Conservation of Races.”¹⁷⁸ In it, Du Bois examines the scientific consensus of the turn of the century, with regards to biological race and finds it wanting. He rejects the notion that races exist in any physical, scientific sense beyond that of a melanin, and instead argues for race classification based on socio-historical qualifications. The acclaimed philosopher and historian Anthony Appiah notes that Du Bois presents a dialectic, between the claim to equality and a simultaneous claim to a unique contribution that only the “negro race” could offer. To provide this unique contribution, Du Bois engaged in the more Washingtonian project of uplift, though not one geared to achieve political or civic equality. In this sense, Appiah claims, “that the white race and its racial Other are not related as superior to inferior but as complementarians.”¹⁷⁹ With this understood, Du Bois stands in the midst of eugenicists like Grant and Pinchot, asserting that a common ancestry—derived from the same Darwinian science those same progressives applied to

¹⁷⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Conservation of Races,” *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers* No. 2 (1897).

¹⁷⁹ Anthony Appiah, “The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race,” *Critical Inquiry* 12:1 (Autumn 1985), 25.

society—meant whites and blacks were equal. Where Grant saw African Americans as the dangerous, weed-like masses, choking out the life from Redwoods, the white race, Du Bois allowed for no such distinction to be made. African Americans, too, were as the threatened Redwoods, in danger of regressing to a state in which they would be unable to offer humanity their unique gift.

The Myth of the White Wilderness

The history of African Americans in the natural environment of Montana is not rare, unique, or even unexpected. No legal or social exceptions were in place to keep African Americans from enjoying Nature. Yet this history is likely new for many readers. The reason for this reflects the circumstances of a settler state that held whiteness up as the ideal and the conservation movement that was born among its sediments. It is along this vein that environmental historian Mark Fiege contemplated the absence of black voices in the syllabi of nature writing and environmental literature courses.¹⁸⁰ Why, for instance, is W.E.B. Du Bois' *Darkwater* not considered a great piece of nature writing? Fiege's confrontation with racial sedimentation in the halls of academia is an acute exercise in identifying how imperial formations continue to have meaning in our present. Du Bois himself seems to answer this question. To be a nature writer, one must be in a particular kind of relationship with a particular kind of nature. To have such relationship, one must be a steward. In addition to be a steward, one must have some claim—individually or communally—to the land. Du Bois, James Baldwin, and many scholars

¹⁸⁰ Mark Fiege, *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 492.

since, have pointed out the fetish of ownership that characterizes whiteness in America. To own the land meant to be white.¹⁸¹ In many scenes of environmental history, especially in the South, African Americans' relationship to the land was not of this particular sort. Instead, it was one of knowing the land as well as knowing one's labor, and of deep connections to the source of subsistence. To venture into the world of African American nature writing is to recognize that it can and does exist on a divergent trajectory from the world of Muir or Thoreau who removed themselves from such environments often to the highest peaks where one is closest to God and farthest from human toil. Yet even when Du Bois or Langston Hughes even come remarkably close to what might be considered "classic" types of nature writings about the wild and sublime, still it is dismissed.

The absence of Du Bois from nature writing courses is the occlusion born of the same colonial history that eroded the memory of the relationship between black Montanans and nature. It did so by excluding the black community from subsequent conservation and environmentalist movements, and peddling policies and reform on the national level that used eugenics and pseudo-science to fight for the conservation of natural resources at the same time they sought to conserve whiteness. Scholars such as Du Bois, Cheryl Harris, and George Lipsitz argue that whiteness is foundationally a religion of sorts. Its principal tenet is the sacralization of ownership. Just as these labor scholars conceive of the religion of whiteness with its temples (factories) and worshipers

¹⁸¹ For whiteness as ownership, see W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), 18; James Baldwin, *The Man Child*. Referenced from Martin Japtok's "The Gospel of Whiteness: Whiteness in African American Literature," *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, 49:4 (Winter, 2004), 489.

(laborers), might one also consider the granite walls of Yosemite or the alluvial valleys of Glacier as cathedrals to whiteness, and Madison Grant, Irving Fisher, and Gerald Pinchot their priests? Thus, a legacy of federal and state control becomes one of ownership of such places. Once the land is appropriated from indigenous peoples for white settlers, the colonial project commences, but when land is further set aside for use by the “Nation,” such as national parks, wilderness areas, and other public lands, its status as property is cemented. As such, places of permanent and communal ownership become the temples to the white ideal—monuments of racialized imperial debris.¹⁸²

Yet, how could such substantial racial monuments have been erected in Montana’s cultural memory without being overtly stated and constantly scrutinized? Martin Japtok in his essay, “The Gospel of Whiteness: Whiteness in African American Literature,” makes the important distinction that whiteness never considers itself as “white,” rather, it establishes itself as the standard and norm against which all others are measured. George Lipsitz states, that “[a]s the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations.”¹⁸³ Such a theory addresses why, in Montana for instance, race or whiteness are never mentioned within the confines of conservationism. Montana’s wild spaces—appropriated from indigenous peoples and subsequently set aside for the “Nation”—become places of

¹⁸² See Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

¹⁸³ George Lipsitz, quoted in Martin Japtok, “The Gospel of Whiteness: Whiteness in African American Literature,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, 49:4 (Winter, 2004), 489.

worship within this property-oriented system of beliefs without anyone having to make such a claim.

Thus, Japtok considers the role of African American writings as one that must seek to acknowledge and make known the nature of whiteness, subverting the racist social construct. “African American works on whiteness have attempted to make ‘whiteness’ visible. How ironic, then, that these works themselves have become invisible.”¹⁸⁴ Here, one should remember the question posed by Fiege, and recognize that they are one and the same. This reality is not one born of irony, however. Instead, it is the product of deliberate erosion, seeking to erase the voices that make such realities visible. Together, these questions suggest the odious role that racism played in America’s and Montana’s environmental history. By placing such polyvalent inquiries into conversation, the unsettling conclusion is that race and whiteness lay hidden within the foundation of America’s conservation movement. The history of black Montanans partaking of the wilderness experience is therefore subversive to the social construct which considered public, wild spaces as intrinsically white, and therefore calls out their conservation as a campaign of whiteness.

Black Nature Writing in “God’s Garden”

Du Bois lamented in *Darkwater* that the natural beauty of Acadia National Park or the Grand Canyon—places where he contemplated the promise of true liberty in America—was limited for African Americans. In turn, the natural world took on the ethereal potentiality of freedom. He writes,

¹⁸⁴ Japtok, 489

I believe in the liberty for all men the space to stretch their arms and their souls, the right to breathe and the right to vote, the freedom to choose their friends, enjoy the sunshine, and ride on the railroads, uncursed by color; thinking, dreaming, and working in a kingdom of beauty and love.¹⁸⁵

Du Bois claimed that access to the natural world was limited by racism, particularly Jim Crow era travel policies. Yet, for those black Americans who themselves lived on the edges of such awe inducing places, it was not their physical access to the wild that was limited, but their engagement in the national discourse of its conservation.

The history of Montana's black wilderness experience, as well as the writings which contemplate their place within nature, affirm that the connection between race and the environment—as in all things—is a construct. Racism may well have made temples to whiteness out of mountains and rivers, but it was not successful in removing African Americans from such places, only our memory of their presence. Still, examples of black Montanans expressing their relationship with the land on paper have, though rarely, managed to survive. Newspapers provide sparse examples of black Nature writing in Montana. Co-editor of the *Butte New Age*, Chris Dorsey, wrote eloquently of the mountains and rivers of Alaska while on a trip there with his employer, copper magnate Augustus Heinze. “We started on a trip up the channel of the Alaskan coast...the grandeur of the scenery and the remarkable incidents of which are almost impossible to describe in a limited newspaper article.”¹⁸⁶ Dorsey continued to describe his adventure in terms like “the grandeur and sublimity of the mountain scenery...which one never tires of.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), 2.

¹⁸⁶ Chris Dorsey, “Alaska Notes,” *The Butte New Age*, August 9, 1902, page 1.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

Yet for the eloquence that Dorsey chose to recount the natural world of Alaska and the Yukon, there exists even rarer, literary examples of black Montanans and their soliloquies to Nature. Rose Gordon—sister of the well-known tenor, Emmanuel Taylor Gordon who authored *Born To Be*, an acclaimed piece of Harlem Renaissance literature—wrote prolifically of her life in the Smith River Valley of Montana where she made her home. The geography of the valley in relation to Gordon’s home is significant to understand to what ends many African Americans went to commune with nature. While Rose Gordon’s lifelong home in the small town of White Sulphur Springs lay near the south end of what is known as the Smith River Valley, the famous river and its stunning canyon walls, adjacent meadows, and dense forests were actually found many miles north of her home. The town where she moved to as a young child of former slaves, even early on in Montana’s history, held the Smith River Valley up as their collective “possession.” Gordon was raised not only as a black girl listening to her mother and older black neighbors speak about the past in places like Missouri and Alabama, but as a member—however complex and fractional—of a community that placed cultural and social significance upon a specific natural feature in central Montana. Rose’s writings later in life speak to this in poetic and nostalgic terms. Her thoughts on the land clearly hold spiritual and social value. She writes,

When I was a girl I would go to church picnics. We would roam the hills and pick flowers and behold Nature in all her gorgeous splendor, see beautiful birds, and hear them sing. We would sit on the high, rocky points and see how perfect the trees were made, as if someone had taken great care in placing them. I said to myself, ‘These things all belong to God, and it is such a privilege for me to be permitted to enjoy them.’ I saw the flowers of many colors bowing and nodding to each other. I thought of them as the people of all Nations. And that, dear people, is why I am not

prejudice. This is all God's world and the people regardless of race, color, or creed are his people.¹⁸⁸

Such lines harken back to the language of liberty employed by Du Bois, whereas African Americans might convene with Nature, "thinking, dreaming, and working in a kingdom of beauty and love."¹⁸⁹

Her book contains many references to wild spaces of Montana, and her home specifically. One such line speaks to the complexity with which we should view the black wilderness experience. At the beginning of her life story, Rose said, "I had always thought of it [the Smith River Valley] as God's garden."¹⁹⁰ Although one of only a few black residents of White Sulphur Springs, Gordon was by no means isolated from her ethnic community, or insulated from the prevailing prejudice. Therefore, by rendering her natural world as "God's garden," her words challenge Stoll's assertion that, "the dominant metaphor [for the black Nature experience] has been Moses in the wilderness, not Adam in the garden."¹⁹¹

The purpose of including the fragmented archive of black Nature writing in Montana is not to disprove Stoll's thesis, as such an incomplete archive could hardly do. Instead, the writings of Rose Gordon, Chris Dorsey and few others suggest the cultural and social importance that Nature and wilderness played in the lives of black Montanans.

¹⁸⁸ Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days*, an unpublished manuscript archived in the "Emmanuel Taylor Gordon Papers" (MC 150, Box 11-2), 15-16, Accessed on 8/15/2017 at the Montana Historical Society Special Collections.

¹⁸⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), 2.

¹⁹⁰ Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days*, an unpublished manuscript archived in the "Emmanuel Taylor Gordon Papers" (MC 150, Box 11-2), 15-16, Accessed on 8/15/2017 at the Montana Historical Society Special Collections.

¹⁹¹ Mark Stoll, "Religion and Environmental Activism," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, eds. (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2006), 160.

They augment the accounts of the black wilderness experience in such a way that forces historians to reconsider black participation and contributions, and subsequently, ponder their omission from the state and national discourse on conservation. The history of the black community in the natural world at the onset of the conservation movement is one of rich stories and culturally rooted engagement. Such engagement suggests that their exclusion from conservationism is more acutely synthesized as one that intentionally ignored the ongoing black presence in the landscape of Montana, and thus promulgated the prevailing national discourse that African Americans remained disengaged from the outdoors in any real sense. In Montana and other places across the nation, the occlusion of black history from a central social unifier in settler states—the collective ownership of land—continued a project of cultural dispossession.

Conclusion: Magpies, African Americans, and the Settler Logic

A review of the scholarship pertaining to African Americans and the environmental and conservation movements reveals the extent to which this history is seen as a national concern. Carolyn Finney, Dorceta Taylor, Mark Stoll, and others all consider the broader role and purpose that conservation played in racial politics. The scholarly scaffolding is erected around concepts of national vitality and social justice, akin to the underlying concerns of the 1964 Wilderness and Civil Rights Acts. Finney argues that the two should not be so easily separated from one another, and thus that theories in environmental and social justice retain common epistemological moorings.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the African American relationship with the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

Likewise, Taylor contextualizes issues of race and class within the national arena of early conservation movements in America, where stereotypes of Southern blacks affected the ways that white middle class conservationists constructed myths of black nature experiences.¹⁹³

Yet for all the value and contribution these scholars bring to black environmental history generally, their studies often neglect the experiences of Rose Gordon, or other black Montanans who convened and engaged in Nature in ways far beyond the framework proposed in national conservation and racial discourses. This does not deny that black Montanans saw the vestige of lynching in the trees of Montana's forests or the river bottoms as places of mourning where so many black men and women's bodies were discovered throughout the South. Nevertheless, we must consider what the archive of the black Nature experience says about the community's connection to those painful and ongoing memories in the wild spaces of Montana. This chapter has argued that the colonial afterlife which should draw our attention is that of omission of black voices and experiences in nature rather than any actual absence. In doing so, it highlights the distinct regionality that characterizes the racial history of Montana and the West.

Within the social construct of the settler colonial state, black Montanans were removed and erased in historical memory from movements like conservationism. This task was encouraged by several key figures on the national level espousing the simultaneous and connected ideologies of conservation of Nature and the conservation of Whiteness. This connection is not mere coincidence, just as the anxiety surrounding the

¹⁹³ Dorceta Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2016).

magpie was part of the way white Montanans thought about the “West Indian Negro” poachers, or the black community of their own state. Conservationism played an important, if uncomfortable role in the settler colonial project. Especially with regard to the setting aside of land for “public” use, conservation worked hand in hand with various projects of land appropriation and racial exclusion. And in this fashion, the history of the black wilderness experience came to suffer the occluding sedimentation of the settler colonial project.

While the very history of black Montanans in the natural world attests to its distinct regionality, the omission of that narrative from the dominant settler society can be mediated and contextualized by the humble magpie. In Montana, the members of the corvid family, such as crows, jays, and magpies, began to weigh upon the thoughts of its human residents in the early twentieth century as populations rose. Magpies and other related species are remarkable for their ability to adapt and thrive in urban and human environments. This seems not to have been lost on Sherlin Stillmen Berry when he classified them as the fourth creature who, “with trickery and adaptation, meets invasive man half-way.”¹⁹⁴

It is important to note under what conditions, exactly, that the magpie seemed to be most intensely targeted by settlers. In Berry’s account, the expansion of industrial and corporate capitalism through large farms and stock ranches ushered in these new relationships between man and nature. Magpies did not suddenly attack sheep and crops because white settlers had encroached on their habitat, rather, white settlers created the

¹⁹⁴ S. Stillmen Berry, “Magpies versus Livestock: An Unfortunate New Chapter in Avian Depredations,” *The Condor* 24:1 (Jan-Feb, 1922), 13.

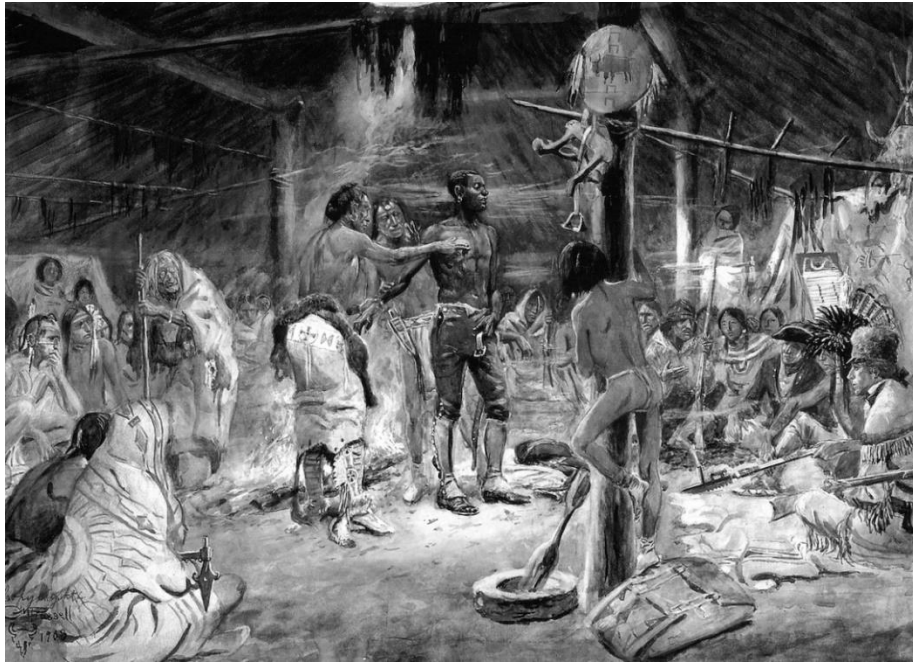
ideal habitat for such birds. At the same time, the rise of American conservationism and the desire to preserve certain game and song birds led to the slaughter of the magpie as an unwanted and dangerous element in the natural world. But why was elimination chosen as the remedy? The presence of man alone would not inevitably spell the end for the magpie; instead, its end needed to be produced. The magpie, when considered in the social milieu of settler colonialism, did not fit the duality of expanding civilization and the elimination of the indigenous.

Bearing in mind the timing and conditions in which magpies faced threats of elimination and biological ruin helps us recognize what settler ideologies of elimination and whiteness actually looked like in the everyday lives of many Montanans. There are striking parallels between the natural and social history. African Americans thrived in Montana during the foremost stages of settler expansion. As detailed in chapter 1, the black community occupied a paradoxical role as both settlers and refugees. Their efforts enhanced the colonial project, simultaneously helping to establish a state whose goal was whiteness, and thus their own exclusion. When industrial capitalism was established in the region, and the uncertainty of indigenous elimination and early state formation gave way to the realities of market whims (as we will see in 1917), economically and socially successful black Montanans became the out-of-place element in settler society. Moreover, as black Montanans ventured out to have their own wilderness experiences on the state's public lands, they threatened to encroach on the most sacred of settler altars—the realization of the ownership of the land through participation.

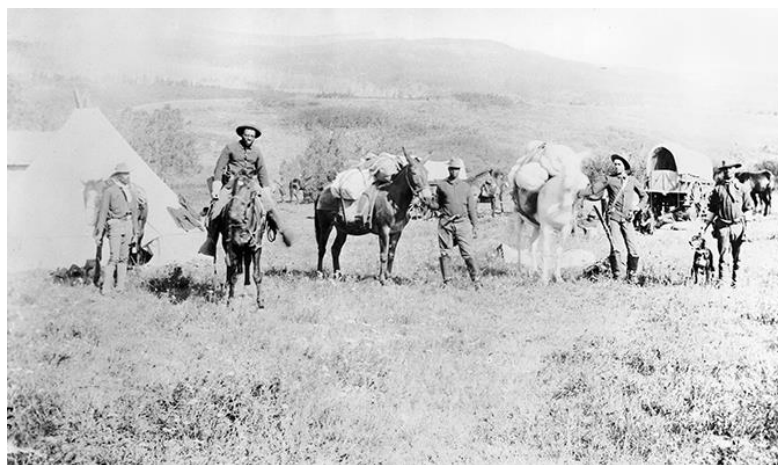
It is precisely at this moment in history that the black population begins to decrease. Between 1910 and 1930, the number of black Montanans drops by over fifty per cent. While the archive does not contain (or has not yet yielded) evidence of the black community being directly targeted for removal by the greater white society, the parallel structure of erosion levied against magpies and African Americans shows that such genocidal sentiments certainly existed at the time. The desire for a white man's West was not only real, but the residents of Montana operated by the logic which argued for this very end. The magpie that terrorized livestock, or poached the eggs of song birds existed on the very landscape that these same settlers had already taken from indigenous peoples at gunpoint, and often by way of massacre. And in much the same way, the land on which was built the houses of working and middle class black Montanans, too, was once the site of the bleeding edge of the settler colonial project. The history of the magpie, therefore, tells of an ideology that fueled westward expansion. And by thinking with this history, the response of white settler colonists to a black community that did not fit their pattern of ontological development can be more fully understood.

Likewise, the connective history of the magpie, the African American wilderness experience, and the conservation movement alludes to an unspoked desire for social and natural simplicity within the settler state. Recall that Sherman Stillman Berry suggested in 1922, that to address the agitation caused by magpies on livestock, only the selective removal of individual birds was needed. In his estimation, *all* magpies were not incompatible with civilization. But the response that the State Sportsman Association eventually took rejected the complexity that Berry's solution would require. Complexity,

mixing, cohabitation, were all concepts that grated against the sensibilities of settler colonists. The colonial term for this in the human dominion, miscegenation—and thus the implicit creation of a complex metis caste, as the next chapter shows—was likewise just as untenable for many white Montanans.



(Fig 2.1) Watercolor by Charles M. Russell given by the artist to MHS depicts William Clark's African-American slave, York, in a Hidatsa lodge where, as ethnologist John C. Ewers writes: "...one of their [i.e., Hidatsa] leaders touched his moistened finger to York's skin expecting that this black color might rub off...York's appearance must have been derived entirely from Russell's imagination, for no physical description of this man is known to have been published until after Russell's death in 1926. Original painting in the collection of the Montana Historical Society.



(Fig 2.2) General Merritt's camp with members of the African-American 10th Cavalry, St. Mary's Lake, 1894. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, 957-994



(Fig 2.3) 25th Infantry bicyclists on Minerva Terrace, Yellowstone National Park, 7 October 1897. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-3614



(Fig 2.4) 25th Infantry bicyclists at Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone National Park, 7 October 1897. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-3616



(Fig 2.5) William Seward Webb's sporting excursion "permanent camp" at Jackson Lake in the Tetons depicts some of the 24 enlisted men from the African-American 9th Cavalry who accompanied Webb's party standing among tents in clearing, Jackson Lake, WY, Sept. 1896. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-3702



(Fig 2.6) 9th Cavalry members who accompanied Webb's party, at tent home of the famous trapper and guide "Beaver Dick" Leigh, who stands in the black vest besides his Native wife. Jackson Lake, WY, Sept. 1896. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-3715



(Fig 2.7) African American waiters from Yellowstone National Park's Canyon Hotel, 1901. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-4874



(Fig 2.8) African American waiters from Yellowstone National Park's Canyon Hotel, 1901. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, H-4873



(Fig 2.9) Two group photographs of members of Helena's African-American women's club, Pleasant Hour Club, at picnic in Colorado Gulch, near Helena, 1926. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, PAc 2002-36.10-11



(Fig 2.10) Photo of D.J. O'Malley (eastern MT range cowboy and cook) with an African-American cowboy in the Forsyth, MT area. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, PAc 85-33 F5



(Fig 2.11) Approximately twenty men & women (some might be white but majority are Black) dressed for the cold & standing on snowy Yellowstone River bank near Ft. Keogh, harvesting ice on the Yellowstone River. Research Center-Photo Archives of the Montana Historical Society, PAc 95-70 Box 17

CHAPTER FOUR

LEGISLATING COLONIAL EROSION:

SEXUALITY, THE FAMILY, AND ANTI-MISCEGENATION LAW IN MONTANA

In 1909, Joseph Bass, the fiery editor of *The Montana Plaindealer*, Helena's black newspaper, declared to his readers, "Montana has joined the Jim Crow colony alongside of Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Arkansas. Muff[l]y, of Jim Crow fame, can now go back to Broadwater and say to his constituency, 'I have saved our race from being devoured.'"¹⁹⁵ Bass was lamenting the passage of Montana's anti-miscegenation bill, making interracial marriage illegal and nullifying such unions from other states. Bass, ostensibly speaking for African Americans, further explained, "[t]his people frown on miscegenation, but object to being singled out for class legislation."¹⁹⁶ The language of the bill prescribed "An act prohibiting marriage between white persons and negroes, persons of negro blood, and between white persons, Chinese, and Japanese, and making such marriages void, and prescribing punishment for solemnizing such unions."¹⁹⁷ Though Bass himself opposed interracial marriage, others in Montana embraced a more progressive position.¹⁹⁸ The historical record attests to fact that black men and women were married to white, Asian, or Native spouses prior to this law's

¹⁹⁵ *The Montana Plaindealer*, March 5, 1909, page 1. (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Senate Journal of the Legislature of the State of Montana, 1909, 11th session, 386.

¹⁹⁸ Michele Mitchell notes that the 1890s was a time of intense Afro-centric examination when it came to matters of sexuality and the family. Many early reformers saw intermarriage as part of the slow degradation of the black race (11), or as an attempt to separate one's self from the black community by marrying "out." Here Bass may be giving voice to this particular sentiment. See Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), 11, 32, 43.

passage. The question, then, should be what new or revealing information can be derived from Montana's marriage laws by viewing this history through the lens of settler colonial erosion? On its surface, the notion of "Jim Crow out West" may seem to suggest that western racism did not differ too greatly from that displayed in the South. To be sure, laws like Montana's 1909 anti-miscegenation bill were the product of, as Bass called it, "the antiquated methods of the South."¹⁹⁹ However, in the absence of a sizable community in Montana by mid-century, we should be all the more mindful to identify the colonial erosion to which this history speaks. Because of the small number of black Montanans and their fierce reliance on the support of community structures, the prohibition of interracial marriage carried some distinctly western consequences.

These consequences arose precisely at a time in which the consolidation of power by the state was at its zenith. Various formations of the settler state that this thesis has already discussed—the entrenchment of the mining and timber economies, the establishments of the railroads for both personal and freight travel by 1900, the organization of the state political structure, which for almost a decade had been a broken, ineffective body divided by various interests, as well as the cultural connections between whiteness and the environment—all represented a consolidation of power.²⁰⁰ The law that was passed banning interracial marriage in 1909 not only had western consequences for black Montanans, but also it represented a moment in this consolidation process. In

¹⁹⁹ Joseph Bass, *The Montana Plaindealer*, February 12, 1909, page 1, (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

²⁰⁰ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 211-213.

effect, such laws worked to consolidate whiteness, as both a social and political concept which worked for the benefit of white settlers in Montana.

♦ ♦ ♦

Race, Sex, and the Transit of Colonial Power

Several chapters of this thesis have highlighted the shifting nature of whiteness and racial inclusion or exclusion based on the needs of the settler colonial project at a given geographic location or moment in history. A discussion of racial categories and sexuality, likewise, follows a similar trajectory. However, unlike economic stability or political inclusion, the domain of sexuality, specifically interracial sex and marriage, provides the most direct and poignant place to see the shift from a society in Montana that offered a future for a black community into one that did not. Anthropologist Ann Stoler argues that racialized sexuality lay at the crux of colonial power. The colonizers, be it the French in Southeast Asia or white settlers in Montana, relied on race to function as the primary marker of difference. For this reason, Stoler says that the point through which all colonial power is transferred is sex. Power is either retained through the prohibition of interracial sex, or it is diffused and complicated by the emergence of a Métis social caste. For this reason, racialized sexuality should be a central, if not *the* central, focus of analysis within colonial histories.²⁰¹ This rings as true for settler

²⁰¹ Stoler's argument is laid out thoroughly in "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," chapter four of *Carnal Knowledge*. Even though her analysis focuses on the French Indochina colonies and Netherland Indies, she nevertheless manages to speak to structures of colonialism at large. Operating under the Foucauldian principle of biopower, Stoler probes the relationship between the Métissage and the white colonials to show the connection between race, sex, and colonial rule. Mirroring the argument of this chapter, Stoler addresses intermarriage and its prohibition in colonial spaces as well. Ann Laura Stoler,

colonialism as it does for traditional colonial models that Stoler explores. In a settler state, land functions as the preeminent manifestation of colonial power. The role of race and sexuality within the system of land appropriation is prescribed in the codex of legislation, federal and state Indian policy, and the ideology of whiteness.

The very concepts of the “one drop rule” or Indian “blood quantum” are premised on the reality of interracial progeny.²⁰² Blood quantum delineates the right of an indigenous person to qualify for tribal membership, and thus a small amount of federal protection or aid. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, tribal membership carried the express weight of access to reservation lands. Following the Dawes act of 1887 and allotment, the theft of native lands accompanied the erosion of native sovereignty. White men frequently married native brides to access farming, hunting, or mineral claims on reservations.²⁰³ Beyond this, children of these interracial couples were subject to the official and deeply complicated system of blood quantum to determine the amount of Indian ancestry for each generation. While allotment broke the ownership of plots of reservation lands into infinitesimally small portions for each tribal heir—rendering the practical ownership of native lands by native people almost impossible in some cases—

Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 80-111, specifically, 16, 43.

²⁰² For recent scholarship on Blood Quantum, see, Paul Spruhan, “A Legal History of Blood Quantum in Federal Indian Law to 1935,” *S.D.L. Law Review* 55:1 (2006); Rose Cuisson Villazor, *California Law Review* Vol. 96, No. 3 (Jun., 2008), pp. 801-837; Bethany R. Berger, “Red: Racism and the American Indian,” *UCLA Law Review* 56 (2008), 591; Katherine Ellinghaus, “The Benefits of Being Indian: Blood Quanta, Intermarriage, and Allotment Policy on the White Earth Reservation, 1889-1920,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2/3, Intermarriage and North American Indians (2008), pp. 81-105.

²⁰³ See, Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacies: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

blood quantum policy eroded the legal status of Indigenous peoples with every generation of white intermarriage and new mixed-race children.²⁰⁴

Prior to the proliferation of white settlement, many western historians have noted the role that intermarriage played in western society. Both Anne Hyde and Elliot West, for instance, show that early white/native marriages served as important conduits of trade, kinship, protection, and political engagement between white trappers and their wives' people. Yet, Elliot West also chronicled the end of these social arrangements. In *The Contested Plains*, West argues that settlement, an early example of which was Denver, was the product of a new vision of what the West was to look like. That vision no longer included the continued existence of the nomadic Cheyenne, Arapahoe, or any other plains tribe. And therefore, the relationships that were forged between the two communities became anachronistic. With this shift, the "squaw men," their native wives, and especially their Métis children were driven from the new communities along the Front Range and on the high plains.²⁰⁵

Beyond any claim that West makes, however, is the possibility that the Métis' swift exclusion from the new western community is not simply the result of a disillusionment with an older structure that was now viewed as obsolete, but rather, that the Métis class actually represented a substantial threat to the early colonial vision for the region. Connected to the plains tribes through strong ties of kinship, this group offered a legitimate avenue through which indigenous peoples might amalgamate with this new

²⁰⁴ For a Montana example of the effects of Allotment, see, Burton M. Smith, "The Politics of Allotment: The Flathead Indian Reservation as a Test Case." *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1979), 131-140.

²⁰⁵ Elliot West, *The Contested Plains, Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 185-189.

society. Above all the many implications of such an ethnic and cultural mixing, of course, is the reality that this could have meant native peoples might retain access to land through ranches, homesteads, farms, mining claims, or other real estate that white settlers desperately coveted. However, *after* the Dawes Act, blood quantum, and the entrenchment of the reservations system, many white men returned to intermarriage with native women to secure access to federally “protected” *native* resources. This only took place once power was consolidated to such an extent that native peoples were firmly barred from the process of settlement.

Allotment, “Indian brides,” and blood quantum policy all worked to wrest the power—and potentiality—of land ownership from native peoples. The central theme of the erosion of tribal land and sovereignty was based on the premise that each generation would have less power, autonomy, or Indianness than the previous. It is telling then, that in 1907 when Charles Muffly introduced the first iteration of the anti-miscegenation law to the Montana legislature, it was roundly defeated primarily because it also outlawed marriages between whites and natives. Many white men seeking to enrich themselves through the further plunder of native lands and resources would lose the most widely utilized means to do so with the passing of such legislation.

That the 1907 bill was defeated in Montana’s state legislature suggests several points of interest. It reveals that, as Joseph Bass claimed, the subsequent 1909 legislation was at least in some part the result of Muffly’s antiquated Southern sympathies.²⁰⁶ The

²⁰⁶ It would be wrong to assume that Muffly was himself a southerner. He was actually born in Montana to Irish immigrant parents. This touches misconceptions of region and ideology that often occur in Montana’s history, especially around the supposed Southern roots of the mostly Northern Vigilantes. Joseph Bass did not think that Muffly was a Southerner, rather he saw the influences of Southern racial

fact that his original language included white and native marriages shows the extent to which Muffly was not operating under the logic of settlement. Moreover, it shows the extent that the state legislature at large did. The 1907 session illustrates the limited sway of Southern ideologies regarding racial pureness in the face of a more pressing project of land appropriation. Whiteness and white supremacy in the West operated in different economies of power, and toward different ends than in they did in the South. While Muffly and, to some extent, Bass, were not aware of this reality, the power of the state attested to the nuanced ways that racial categories—especially of blackness—were being formed and cemented in the region even as late as 1909. Whiteness and white supremacy were directly connected to the ownership of the land, and likewise, the right to call that land—be it a homestead or a neighborhood—home.²⁰⁷

Under the guiding principles of blood quantum, whiteness was not threatened by the intermarriage of white Montanans with Native peoples. Indianness was on an ever eroding path to extinction. Like the mindset of white settler colonists in Australia during the same period, indigeneity could be “bred out.”²⁰⁸ It is the opposite with the relationship of whiteness and blackness. Based on the market principle of the need to expand commodities and the labor force—both categories which black slaves filled in the first centuries of white settler colonization on the continent—the one-drop rule created a

ideology in Muffly’s actions. *1910 US Federal Census, Beaver Creek, Broadwater, Montana*; Roll: T624_829; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0002; FHL microfilm: 1374842, available online at *Ancestry.com*.

²⁰⁷ Patrick Wolfe discusses the connection between Indianness and Blackness within a settler colonial structure in his landmark article, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (December, 2006), 387-388.

²⁰⁸ Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 69-70

category of blackness that is forever moving away from whiteness. Blackness expands while indigeneity decreases. Therefore the goal of the settler state to consolidate power and whiteness in Montana was directly acted upon in the passing of the 1909 anti-miscegenation bill.



In the years leading up to 1909, white Montanans understood the significance of interracial marriage differently. Nearly two decades before Bass decried the actions of the Montana legislature, Z. A. Coleman, a black man, married Mary Laughlin, a white woman, in Helena on January 13, 1891. A copy of their marriage license—which listed Coleman as black and Laughlin as white—attests to no legal barrier impeding their union. The white minister, Reverend William Rollins, made no objection as he performed the ceremony in his home, with his own family as witnesses.²⁰⁹ Coleman and Laughlin met in the kitchen of the Merchants hotel, where they worked as kitchen staff and musical entertainment.²¹⁰ This is all that can be known for certain about the couple.²¹¹ However, adding a layer complexity to their union and insight into interracial marriages in Montana, the local paper, *The Helena Independent*, also provided their readers with an account of the Coleman nuptials.

The *Independent* headline read, “A Case of Miscegenation...A Colored Professor Wins the Heart of a Fair White Maiden.”²¹² According to the paper, the couple presented

²⁰⁹ “Marriage License for Prof. Z. A. Coleman and Mary A. Laughlin,” January 13, 1891. (Accessed online at Ancestry.com).

²¹⁰ Coleman carried the honorific *professor*, often a title given to pianists.

²¹¹ The 1890 Montana census, which would have provided the most information about their lives, was lost to a fire in 1920.

²¹² “A Case of Miscegenation,” *Helena Independent*, January 16, 1891, page 5, (Accessed online at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

their marriage license to the Methodist Episcopal minister, who, upon seeing that *both* parties were listed as “colored,” noted that Mary appeared to be white. The paper later defended him by claiming that many black women he had seen were of a lighter complexion still than the bride.²¹³ Thus, the paper suggested, Coleman and his new wife, whom they identified as a Mary Leonard (not Laughlin), had successfully duped the minister into marrying a white woman to a black man. It went on to claim that “Coleman is a rather distinguished looking man in appearance, is quite dressy and seeks only the company of white folk for which he is very unpopular with his own race.”²¹⁴ The piece ends with the reassurance to the white readers of the paper that not only had Coleman left the hotel and moved to Great Falls to escape the ire of his own people, but also that the community of Helena was better off without both of them. As the author clumsily ends the article, “the girl is uneducated and unable to write her own name.”²¹⁵

What can be made of this newspaper account given so many discrepancies between the legal marriage documentation for Coleman and Laughlin, and the fictitious story about the midnight nuptials of professor Coleman and the base, Mary “Leonard” reprinted by the *Independent*? The nature of the differences and the kind of message the paper wished to convey to its readers says a great deal about Montana society’s general feeling towards interracial relationships. The *Independent* reacts to the union in such a way that shows that, while still steeped in prejudice, it did not intend the article to elicit rage from the white community or call for the complete separation of the races. In fact, in every way, the author attempted to highlight the “whiteness” of Z. A. Coleman while

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

subsequently showing the racial baseness of Mary “Leonard.” The need to make character judgments about each party to justify the legitimacy of the union, and erroneously claiming that the marriage license listed both parties as black, thus duping the minister, speaks to the deep insecurity of white Montanans about this issue, and sought a justification for it.²¹⁶

No small amount of unease existed within the white community about how to react to a black man marrying a white woman. This particular example is important because it seems to represent a transitional view of interracial sexuality. Though the newspaper claimed it was likely the first interracial marriage to take place in Helena, it was not. At least fifteen years before, Mattie Bost Bell, a former slave, married John Castner, a white man, in Helena around 1876.²¹⁷ This too was likely not the first of such unions. When the Castners returned to Fort Benton, they were one of five white and black

²¹⁶ Miscegenation and its governing laws in the American West and Montana is a specifically rich field for scholarship. The most significant studies tend to be large monographs rather than shorter articles as the topic requires a certain amount of time to ruminate through many different considerations. The seminal work in this subfield is Peggy Pascoe’s sublime book, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation and the Making of Race in America* (2009). Pascoe succeeds to place the unique history of race in the American West within a larger, national context. In many ways, Pascoe places the West at the center of the creation of racial categories in twentieth century America. Historian Anne Hyde also provides important temporal perspective to the field in her study, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (2011). By positioning intermarriage between whites and indigenous peoples as fundamental in the history of the fur trade in the West, Hyde provides the starting point to understand race and sexuality later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specific to settler colonialism, Margaret Jacobs shows the devastating connections between sexuality and colonial policies of erasure and cultural genocide in her book, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*, (2009). Though not specific to the American West, Michele Mitchell’s study, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (2004), analyzes the discourse about sex and race within the African American community at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tellingly, Mitchell also makes the connections between the tightening of bodily control and the expansionist, imperial project of the United States in the Pacific. See, *Righteous Propagation*, 67-78.

²¹⁷ Tiya Miles, “The Long Arm of the South?” *Western Historical Quarterly* 43 (Autumn, 2012), 274-281.

couples already living there. The public ire that would be directed toward interracial couples in the early and mid-twentieth centuries was, for the most part, not present.²¹⁸

In her landmark history, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*, Peggy Pascoe documented how sensationalized “miscegenation dramas” began appearing in papers across the American West around the turn of the century in order to whip up public fervor and opposition to intermarriage.²¹⁹ As an early example of a miscegenation drama, the Colman wedding fit the general mold, but lacked any definitive condemnation of their actions. Rather, the *Independent* editorialized a process of justification in which Z. A. Colman was cast as “white” while his Irish-American wife was seen as “black.” This proved not to be the prevailing sentiment as the state moved to erase such unions over the next two decades. Instead, in 1891 Helena, we have been given a window into a kind of middle ground that formed between a world that needed the labor of a black community to further the project of settlement, and one that understood the promise of the region would necessarily exclude Colman, and any future mix-race children he may have.²²⁰

One of the great challenges of writing about the impacts of anti-miscegenation policy apart from a broader national or regional narrative is that the relatively few numbers of interracial unions between members of the white and black communities of

²¹⁸ Ken Robison, “On Being a Black American in Territorial Fort Benton, Parts 1 and 2,” Historical Fort Benton, accessed 1 January 2018, <http://blackamericansmt.blogspot.com/2009/05on-being-black-american-in-territorial.html>.

²¹⁹ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 85-93.

²²⁰ The Colemans disappear from the historical record after the *Independent* runs its piece. The census that would tell us the most about Z.A. and Mary, the 1890 federal enumeration, was infamously destroyed in a Washington D.C. fire. Montana’s census was among the most completely destroyed. They are not listed in Great Falls or elsewhere in Montana by 1900, nor are they listed in city directories across the state, suggesting they left Montana sometime before the end of the century.

Montana tempts one to conceive of the racist legislation as largely symbolic, rather than purposeful.²²¹ In Montana specifically, the fact that fewer than two thousand African Americans lived in the state when the legislation was passed could suggest that so few people were affected by the bill that it is hardly worth further consideration. This perspective is wrong on two fronts. No number of prohibited or nullified unions is insignificant when placed with the broader context, and interracial marriage between whites and blacks in Montana, even numerically, was far more substantial than it may first appear.

Statistics on interracial marriage vary based on available sample sizes. The most accurate numbers come from the 1880 census. Researchers at Columbia University used the full census sample of the United States to determine that blacks married white partners at a rate of about 1 percent, 3,932 black/white couples between 20-40 years of age out of 3,808,334 black Americans of the same age range.²²² This has grown at a consistently exponential rate since the Civil Rights era, but remained at comparable levels from 1880 until after WWII. Montana, with its much smaller population, offers its

²²¹ This is one point where I find Peggy Pascoe's analysis somewhat lacking. While I agree that miscegenation law reinforced racist thinking and led to the continued structuring of racial categories in America, Pascoe shies away from making any claims about the social effect of marriage bans had on African Americans at the level of community experiences, specifically in states like Pascoe's home state of Montana, where the community was already precariously positioned. For Pascoe's discussions about Montana, see, Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10, 91, 136.

²²² Aaron Gullickson, "Black/white interracial marriage trends, 1850–2000." *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 3 (2006), 289-312.

best data on black/white interracial marriage in 1910, when the black population was at its peak, the first year the anti-miscegenation law took effect.²²³

For any host of reasons, be it the small number of potential black partners, small communities separated by large distances, or the perceived progressivism of the new region, black Montanans married whites at a rate of 7 percent, or 20 interracial couples out of 263 married couples with at least one spouse listed as black. The fact that black Montanans married whites at a substantially higher rate than the national average of the same period is somewhat beside the point. Rather, the numbers of interracial marriages, let alone cohabitation, in Montana are substantive enough to warrant serious consideration of a bill that outlawed marriages regardless of national averages. In the two decades *after* 1909, 28 couples openly listed themselves as in an interracial marriage on a government document despite it being illegal. The drop in the number of unions between 1910, when the law had only just taken effect, and 1930 is notable and suggests that its implementation had some tangible consequences.²²⁴

Confirmed or even estimated numbers of interracial marriages before 1900 are difficult to calculate. The only tried method is to analyze the census data. Even for 1910 and 1930, for which there is a relatively complete data set on all African Americans living in Montana, censuses analysis excludes couples who do not list themselves as married, cohabitating couples living as man and wife, homosexual couples that may have

²²³ The Columbia study names the 1910 data set as an outlier because the small sample size of only 0.4%. Aaron Gullickson, "Black/white interracial marriage trends, 1850–2000." *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 3 (2006), 14 (303).

²²⁴ This drop from 20 couples to only 8 must be taken into consideration with the drop of the overall black population during the same time by nearly 50%, close to the same as the decrease in interracial marriages. See appendix A: 3.1

been interracial, those who were married and left Montana or separated before the next census, or, most commonly, instances in which one partner falsely listed themselves as white or black to match the race of their spouse. All of this compounded by the fraught nature of Montana's early censuses—including the total loss of the 1890 enumeration in a Washington D.C. fire in the twenties—makes it nearly impossible to claim that intermarriage was so rare an occurrence that the 1909 law should be seen as largely symbolic. Instead, the passing of racist legislation at that moment in the historical life of the settler state of Montana is more than significant. It is the exemplary manifestation of racialized sexuality—standing at the very heart of colonial power.



Montana Marriage Laws and the Nation

To understand what effects anti-miscegenation legislation had on the stability of the black community, it is first necessary to consider and contextualize the timing. Two narratives, one national and the other regional, run parallel, illustrating the unique circumstances that inform the other. In the national narrative, the progressive era ushered in new-fangled scientific beliefs about race, the environment, and biology.²²⁵ Widely known men like Madison Grant and Irving Fisher entangled national vitality, public health, eugenics, and race. Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*, and Fisher's report to the National Conservation Commission in 1909 extolling the threat of "race suicide" are

²²⁵ Both Ian Tyrell and Peggy Pascoe make the argument that the rise of the eugenics movement played a significant role in the wave of anti-miscegenation laws that were passed in the early twentieth century. Ian Tyrell, *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 181, 182, 184-185; and Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 7, 115-118.

the high-water marks of a fervent national discourse about the preservation of whiteness in all aspects of life. Not to be overlooked is the connection between the country's resurgent obsession with whiteness and the dramatic expansion of the United States' imperial power in Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii, and Panama. The model of imperial presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, ascribed to many of the same ideological tenets regarding race and health as Grant, Pinchot, Fisher, and other conservationists he welcomed into to his administration or inner circle.²²⁶

The national narrative surrounding miscegenation law can also be understood as part of a retaliation of white supremacists to a decade of relative gains made by African Americans following popular uplift and self-betterment programs. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw a renewed focus on race with the rise of national race men and women like Du Bois, Ida Wells, and Booker T. Washington. The emergence of a widely celebrated black intellectual class at the turn of the century threatened new spheres of influence that had long been the stronghold of white supremacists. Anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock write that,

[w]hen the sense of social order is threatened, the symbols of self-control become intensified along with those of social control. Boundaries between the individual and political bodies becomes blurred, and there is a strong concern with matters of ritual and sexual purity, often expressed in a vigilance over social and bodily boundaries.²²⁷

²²⁶ Ian Tyrell focuses on the impact of eugenicists in Roosevelt's administration and various conservation bodies in chapter nine, "Lessons for Living," in *Crisis of the Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 173-188.

²²⁷ Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1:1 (March, 1987) 6.

The challenging of social order that took place intellectually and politically within the halls of the Tuskegee institute and on the pages of *The Crisis*, transferred to politics of the body, sexuality, and, thereby, interracial marriage.

The significance of the connection between bodily control and the perceived transgression of social boundaries extended beyond national conversations in the South and urban North, into the heart of America's ongoing settler colonial projects in the West. The regional and state narratives surrounding miscegenation law mirrors these broader issues, but also presents distinctly western circumstances. Many western states passed similar legislation as Montana throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century.²²⁸ The decades preceding the sweeping legislative action across the region were the apex, not only of the settler project, but of black participation and social establishment in the West. The social "transgression" in this sense, was the very presence of black Westerners at all.

There is no small amount of precariousness in the argument that anti-miscegenation law can be seen as a reaction to a certain moment in the settler colonial project in Montana or elsewhere. One of the central features of settler policies is that they are often byproducts of the society at large and are thus somewhat obscured. They are not typically manufactured for the direct purpose to further the goals of settlement—such as the countless treaties with Native tribes, or even the Dawes Act. It may be possible that

²²⁸ It is important to place this discourse within a settler colonial frame. Otherwise, western miscegenation laws are too easily construed as reactionary to events taking place in the rest of the nation. This of course implies that somehow the West is not part of the nation, or in any way contributes to these broader discourses. I suggest that we also consider the regional factors at play in conjunction with national debates. Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota all instituted their first marriage bans in 1909, following other western states like Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Oregon, and California which had implemented bans in the late nineteenth century. Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 29, 30, 118.

anti-miscegenation laws, especially in the West, originated somewhere in between the overt policies of appropriation and, say, the illegal closing of black businesses, which is not itself colonial, but does stem from and further the goals of the settler state.

Most westerners might have been completely oblivious that the project of colonial settlement in places like Montana had reached a critical juncture at the end of the nineteenth century. With the last Indian War already fought, the final entrenchment of the reservation system complete, and dominance of extractive capitalism secured—the American people did, however, have an understanding that a new era was on the horizon. Consider that in 1893 Fredrick Jackson Turner made one of the most important statements on the future of the American West. In his famous address, *The Importance of the Frontier in American History*, Turner declared the frontier closed, and the great expanses of land that had fueled the growth of democracy, settled. Anxiety permeated Turner's frontier thesis as well as the public's reaction to it. In a certain sense, Turner had clued the nation in on what might have been an obscure moment in history and created a regional and national debate about the implications of a "settled" West.²²⁹

What was to be the nature of this post-frontier society? The nineteenth century-West had been marked by unprecedented changes and overwhelming uncertainty. The bleeding edge of settler colonialism cut through the region, creating environments of fear, violence, and genocide. The economy of the early settler state was dominated by no-holds-barred, unfettered capitalism. The very nature of life in the West was, as one

²²⁹ Much has been written about the impacts of Turner's frontier thesis. Kerwin Kline's massive historiographical study, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990*, stands as the most complete excursion through the afterlife of Turner's 1893 declarations. See, Kerwin Lee Kline, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

historian put it, all hands on deck. As such, there was, at least for a time, a place for black hands as well. The Buffalo Soldiers, black rail workers, black entrepreneurs, and the majority of black service workers that were employed in the hospitality, restaurant, retail, and domestic industries all serviced the early needs of the settler state in some fashion, as discussed in chapter one. The fervor of western cities like Butte, Helena, Billings, and Great Falls was initiated by a thirst for available land, mining or timber claims, and the jobs surrounding the settler project. The question that Turner indirectly posed to many white westerners at the dawn of the new century was how to maintain western society when access to the preeminent resource—land—disappeared.

In 1993, on the one hundredth anniversary of Turner's address, historians from various disciplines and backgrounds weighed in on the legacy of the frontier thesis. Historian Margaret Washington pondered the lack of black Westerners in Turner's work. Like many since, she aptly addressed the fact that Turner's histories turned a blind eye to the reality that the frontier was occupied and being settled by blacks as well as whites at the time of his famous address. Moreover, Washington also delved into the concept of "frontier" within African American history. She noted that in Peter H. Wood's famous book, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*, Wood argued that the frontier of early Carolina was marked by minimal social barriers and individual liberty for blacks. However, upon the introduction of the rice culture,

[T]he large slave importations necessary for developing rice cultivation coupled with black assertion led to mounting white anxiety, creating a more firmly entrenched bondage system and repressive slave codes. As

the South Carolina frontier was transformed into a settled region, black autonomy and initiative was stifled.²³⁰

Peter H. Wood, prefiguring the discourse of settler colonialism by almost thirty years, argued that a shift in racial policies and social acceptance followed the process of a region actively *being* settled, into a region that *was* settled. Just as “mounting white anxiety” caused a tightening of racial control on the shifting frontier of the Carolinas in the eighteenth century, similar processes were underway on the “frontier” of the American West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³¹

It is no coincidence that Montana was among the most ethnically diverse states in the country in 1890 when the frontier ostensibly closed. It is no coincidence that the “whitening of the West” began at a moment—roughly the last few decades of the nineteenth century—when the public perception of the West shifted from being an open space where American individualism reigned, to a space dominated by federal and state control. And it is no coincidence that white westerns responded to these and other anxieties by tightening state control on issues like the body and sex. The results of Montana’s 1909 anti-miscegenation law show that it furthered the exclusionary policies

²³⁰ Margaret Washington, “African American History and the Frontier Thesis,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer, 1993), 239.

²³¹ The framework of settler colonialism that is entangled with regionalism, which this thesis uses, presents something interesting and new regarding Turner. While a regional analysis of the settler colonial West still finds a myriad of faults with Turner’s frontier, it simultaneously suggests that the logic of settlement might be deeply connected to Turner’s own way of viewing the West. In this way, Turner himself becomes the historical subject, and his writings cannot be merely passed off as ethnocentric, racist, or idealized, but as quintessentially colonial. The obvious irony here is that for decades one of the great critiques of Turner was that the frontier was considered *the* bastion of American exceptionalism in the historical discipline. Perhaps we might begin to entertain the idea that the American frontier of Turner was less exceptional and very much the product of a dialectical and ontological settler colonial binary between civilization and savagery, and between white and Indigenous. This line of inquiry, I believe, promises to be one of the most fruitful in the expanding scholarship between western and settler colonial historiographies.

indicative of a post-frontier settler state, even if men like state Senator Charles Muffly were operating under different, and more nationally-informed beliefs.

♦ ♦ ♦

Joseph Roy, his wife Lillie, and their three sons James, John, and Joe Jr. faced daunting prospects starting in 1909. The Roy family had lived in Anaconda for about five years, where Joseph had worked a variety of jobs on the “Hill” of the Washoe smelter. Joseph was white, born in West Virginia to an English father and Canadian mother. Lillie was black. The couple had married twenty-four years earlier in Lillie’s home state of Missouri. Like many white men in western Montana, Joseph came to enjoy job security at the Anaconda Company. The Company, one of the largest enterprises in the world, in no uncertain terms held Joseph’s and his family’s future in its hands. And that may likely have been the reason that the Roy family moved to Washington two years later.²³²

At forty-four years old, Joseph Roy entered a phase of his life in which many people began thinking about their family’s future prospects. Joseph had two sons in their late teens, and young Joe Jr. who was five years old in 1909. Lillie kept and maintained the family home on Spruce Street, which Joseph had bought free and clear a few years before. This suggests that Joseph was a man of at least some means, firmly placed in Anaconda’s more affluent working-middle class. The three Roy brothers grew up in the city’s white, Italian neighborhood, though they were still close to the majority of other black children who lived near downtown and on the north side of the tracks along the

²³² 1910 US Federal Census, *Anaconda Ward 1, Deer Lodge, Montana*; Roll: T624_831; Page: 14B; Enumeration District: 0012; FHL microfilm: 1374844, accessed online at *Ancestry.com*.

banks of Washoe Creek.²³³ At the passing of the state's ban and nullification of interracial marriages, the future of Lillie Roy and her sons was very much in question.

Had Joseph Sr. died while they lived in Anaconda, which was plausible considering the dangerous nature of his work, the Anaconda Company, which held his pension and all other benefits, legally might refuse to pay out to his widow or sons on the grounds that their union was not binding in the state of Montana. Insurance companies could refuse to honor the policy given current state laws. The family home might be held by the state, as his wife and children were no longer acceptable heirs. In short, the bill that passed in 1909 eroded the Roy family's ability to see a future for themselves in Montana. In 1912, Joseph and Lillie sold the family home, and moved their sons to Washington, the only state in the Rocky Mountain or Pacific Northwest that had no restrictions on interracial marriage.

Interracial couples like the Roys—a black wife and white husband—offer another important point to consider. Historian Tiya Miles ponders the gender dynamic of interracial couples in the West, and in Montana specifically. Recall the marriage of John and Mattie Bost Bell Castner of Belt, Montana. In an article entitled, “The Long Arm of the South?” Miles singled out the Castners as an example of the limits of Southern frameworks of analysis in the American West. Bringing with her an expert understanding of the racialized, sexual violence that so often weighed heavy upon the relationships of white men and black women, Miles admittedly expected to uncover a story in which John, an older white man of means, occupied a position of disproportional power over Mattie, mirroring the Southern archetype of age old sexual violence against women of

²³³ Ibid.

color. But instead Miles found that Mattie's life was not one marked by this unequal power dynamic as much as it was a narrative of Mattie's own agency and self-determination in her new environment. Miles wondered if these regional historic truths might not reach as far as we think—that there may, after all, be something distinctly *western* about this marriage.²³⁴

In the analytical light of settler colonialism, the fact that Joseph Roy chose to move to Washington, a decision that secured a better future for his black wife and children suggests something similar to what Tiya Miles found in the lives of John and Mattie Castner. The Roys' interaction with the settler state via anti-miscegenation law shows that Joseph's and Lillie's relationship might very well be one that more resembled a consensual partnership built on mutual love and respect, rather than a Southern paradigm of sexual violence. The Roys were, of course, only one of over a dozen white husband/black wife couples living in Montana during the decades following the passage marriage ban.²³⁵ Like Tiya Miles questioning the "long arm of the South," and the reach of other regional frameworks in history, a western, settler colonial framework—which this thesis argues for—offers new and important insights to those studying the lives of Montana's many interracial couples in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

By the numbers, roughly around the time that the anti-miscegenation law was passed, there were three interracial couples living Anaconda, with ten children between the Roy, Daly, and Ellis families.²³⁶ In Missoula, five of the seven couples featured

²³⁴ Tiya Miles, "The Long Arm of the South?" *Western Historical Quarterly* 43 (Autumn, 2012), 274-281.

²³⁵ See appendix A: 3.1

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

white, foreign born husbands and black wives. Billings, Butte, Miles City, Havre, and Livingston all had several interracial couples. Again, fewer than one in ten black Montanans took white spouses, however, each of these individuals' stories presents the possibility of expanding the richness and texture of the history of family, gender, and race in Montana. Some stories, like that of the elderly John and Annie Williams of Missoula, seemed to outlast the assault on their union, as they remained together and living in Missoula until Annie's death shortly before 1930. John was nearly 90 years old when Annie, an Irish immigrant and his wife of 69 years passed away.²³⁷

It is difficult to find the erosive impacts of a law that nullified a union that began in 1871. Other impacts seem more apparent. In Missoula, Solomon Dorsey, the younger brother of Ephraim Dorsey, the most prominent member of the black community of that city, had been married to his wife Sarah, a white woman, for nine years when the marriage ban was passed. The next year, sometime after the 1910 census was taken, they divorced. These are the details from the archive that challenge us to place deeply personal histories in a broader social context. The cause of Solomon's and Sarah's divorce is unknown. However, even if their marriage was already strained, the cloud of legal prohibition certainly did not make matters better. The fact remains that some couples like John and Annie Williams maintained their marriage after 1909. Many others did not. Several couples divorced between 1910 and 1930, three of the couples in Missoula divorced after 1910 (only John and Annie remained married). Moreover, seventeen

²³⁷ 1910 US Federal Census, *Missoula Ward 4, Missoula, Montana*; Roll: T624_834; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 0070; FHL microfilm: 1374847; 1930 US Federal Census, *Missoula, Missoula, Montana*; Roll: 1259; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0014; FHL microfilm: 2340994, *accesses online at Ancestry.com*.

interracial couples who were listed as married in 1910, no longer resided in Montana by the next census. It would be impossible to maintain that the law was largely symbolic for these families.

Not only was this law far more than a symbol to the few black Montanans that would marry whites, it was also a reality for thousands of black children and single young adults. In 1910, just after Senator Muffly's miscegenation bill passed, the percentage of single African Americans between the ages 15 and 40 in the major cities was, on average, 30 percent. Two decades later, in 1930, that figure had dropped to 18 percent. This, taken in account with the 30 percent drop of those cities' overall black population meant that single men and women found their prospects of marriage severely constricted simply because so few single blacks remained in the state.²³⁸ Black Montanans living in rural towns across the state now additionally faced the reality that the white boy or girl next door or at school were no longer possible spouses. Further, the practice of finding partners from other black communities became increasingly difficult as the black population slowly began to fall. Belle Ward, the granddaughter of Richard and Mary McDonald, Bozeman's earliest black settlers, traveled 80 miles to Helena to marry a young black man named Richard Fisher in 1925.²³⁹ Even as late as 1942, sisters Mary

²³⁸ Data on Singles 15-40 derived from the 1910 and 1930 U.S. Federal Censuses, African American populations, (Available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>).

²³⁹ "Marriage Certificate for Richard Fisher and Belle Ward," August 15, 1925, (Accessed online at Ancestry.com).

and Ruth Mundy, daughters of a black rancher outside Helena, married brothers Woodrow and Felix Driver of Anaconda (some one hundred miles away).²⁴⁰

Helena had long been the center for young single African Americans. Through the mid-twentieth century, this practice of marrying from other towns often was the only way black Montanans could marry. The Driver Brothers and Mundy sisters were fortunate in this respect. In 1910, nearly one hundred Helena residents, 32 percent of the black population, were single and between 15 and 40 years of age. Over the next twenty years, that population would decline by an astonishing 78 percent.²⁴¹ To be sure, these numbers are not an indicator that the number of marriages increased in the black community as much as it highlights the shocking number of single black Montanans who left at a young age. When considering what could have brought about the erosion of this demographic group, one so important to the longevity of any community, the fact that legislative measures were taken to restrict that very group's ability to find partners should not be overlooked. Precisely at a time when the dismantling of community spaces and exclusionary employment practices threatened the livelihoods of black Montanans, the future security of family structures also came under attack. For a half century, until the law's repeal in 1953, it compounded the vulnerability of black communities, driving many young single African Americans to seek their future elsewhere.²⁴²

²⁴⁰“Marriage License for Woodrow Driver and Mary Mundy” January 3, 1940, (Accessed online at Ancestry.com), “Marriage License for Felix Driver and Ruth Mundy” January 20, 1942. (Accessed online at Ancestry.com).

²⁴¹ Data on Singles 15-40 derived from the 1910 and 1930 U.S. Federal Censuses, African American populations, (Available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>).

²⁴² Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 243.

There is an inverse side to this argument as well. Rose Gordon of White Sulphur Springs came to be viewed by the people of the community and the whole Judith Basin area as one of the most celebrated residents. Though she frequently suffered indignities for her race in various social spheres, Rose Gordon became deeply ingrained within the white settler society. She catered to the residents of White Sulphur Springs as a restaurant owner and physio-therapist, performing gendered acts of community maternalism as a caregiver and healer. She also became something of a community historian, writing numerous articles for the local paper chronicling the history of white settlers.²⁴³ One must question how Rose Gordon was able so to fully incorporate her life into a settler community that otherwise had no other black residents. The broader contextual history of anti-miscegenation laws sexualized aspects to the logic of settlement suggest that Rose Gordon was able to become a maternal figure in White Sulphur Springs in part because she was not a mother. Gordon remained single her entire life, and within her autobiography never alludes to any romantic interests. For white residents, Rose's blackness was thus unthreatening to the future whiteness of the area.

Conclusion

The history of miscegenation law illuminates the racial afterlife of colonial Montana. In every town with a black community or those with even just one single black family, the passage of the marriage ban in 1909 marked the beginning of a period in which every member of those communities became enmeshed in the politics of the settler

²⁴³ Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days* (unpublished manuscript) located in the Montana Historical Society Archives, MC 150, 11-2. pp. 83, 132.

state. Peggy Pascoe notes that in the case of miscegenation law the real power rests in the hands of city and county officials and community members at large to support or denounce those officials' decisions.²⁴⁴ Even when white Montanans chose to ignore the law and look beyond bureaucratic declarations to recognize interracial marriages in many instances, their latent participation in the democracy that made intermarriage illegal in the first place had far reaching and erosive consequences.

Underlying principles of settler colonial sexual ideology informed the curation of marriage laws and public sexual mores in Montana around the turn of the century. The timing of the legal measures came at a moment when the national discourse on a host of issues from intellectualism, to science and health, to the expansion of the American empire in the Pacific all swirled anxiously around the questions of race and whiteness. But at the same moment, swirling anxieties also fermented in the American West and Montana as one phase of the settler colonial project gave way to the next. In public parlance, this was the closing of the frontier, and the dawning age of a new West. The old West's cast of characters had exited the stage. The subjugation of the Native was secure and the theft of their lands nearly complete. Whiteness no longer would be measured solely against indigeneity, but against blackness, brownness, or Asianness as well. The passage of laws that tightened state control over the domains of sexuality and the body was part of the effort to whiten the West.

The whitening did not merely affect the lives of black Montanans already in an interracial marriage or the children of one. It compounded other ongoing efforts to

²⁴⁴ "Seeing Like a Racial State," in Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 133.

destabilize the black community across the state. In Bozeman, 1918, Fred Harris and his son Fred Jr. moved to Tacoma, Washington. Young Fred Jr. was only eight years old at the time. He had lived his entire life in Bozeman, but after the early death of his mother Emily, Fred Sr. understood that there was not much of a future for his son in Montana anymore.²⁴⁵ This was true economically, culturally, and civically. But perhaps most importantly, the future was bleakest for the Harris' socially and romantically. In 1918 when father and son left Bozeman, and throughout the following decade, there was not one single person living in Bozeman that Fred Jr. might one day legally marry.²⁴⁶ Death had already denied this eight-year old boy a mother; the state would have denied him a future partner and family also.

²⁴⁵ 1910 US Federal Census, *Bozeman Ward 3, Gallatin, Montana*; Roll: T624_832; Page: 8B; Enumeration District: 0139; FHL microfilm: 1374845; 1930 US Federal Census, *Tacoma, Pierce, Washington*; Roll: 2510; Page: 8A; Enumeration District: 0125; FHL microfilm: 2342244, accessed online at *Ancestry.com*

²⁴⁶ See Bozeman census data, 1910-1930, Research of the Montana Historical Society, available at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORY AMONG THE SEDIMENTS:

ON THE ENTANGLEMENTS OF RACE AND REGION

This thesis has sought to historicize the black community in Montana from 1880-1930, and in doing so, it has retold the story of Montana itself. This final chapter addresses concluding questions posed frequently to local historians studying Montana's African Americans: where did these early black Montanans go, and why did they leave? Each of the four preceding chapters has provided partial insight into these issues. This chapter synthesizes the experiences thousands of African Americans in Montana and the West to arrive at a more complete answer. The experiences of a learned doctor, pharmacist, or lawyer were not identical, of course; nor were they subject to the exact same processes of colonial erosion that laborers, porters, bellhops, and waiters were. Moreover, those experiences were not necessarily transferable to many black women in a variety of others occupations and classes. Further still, circumstances differed significantly based on geography and the types of communities in which they lived. Yet all these experiences were lived by people who encountered the erosive designs of settler colonialism. Consequently, the history of that place—where the settler logics of appropriation and anti-black racism functioned as the underlying structural support for the colonial formation—is entangled with this history of all peoples whom the settler society purposefully excluded.

Settler ideologies, which so profoundly formed the world of Montana in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conceived of a society that would bend inevitably toward whiteness. The ongoing process that came to be engrained in various social and cultural formations has been called in this study, colonial erosion. The history of black Montana shows that this process was at best, fragmented, staggered, and experienced unevenly. Often, this faltering was produced by the very presence of a black community in Montana, as well as the many individual and communal acts of resistance which colored much of local and state history. Still, as the introduction to this thesis alluded, of all western states which came into maturity around the turn of the century, as of 2010, Montana was home to the smallest population of African American residents.²⁴⁷ So it seems that this particular variant of the settler project was most successful during Montana's coming of age in the twentieth century.

The erosion of the "racial frontier" is a defining characteristic of state (and regional) history, but, as to whether this reality constitutes the end of the narrative, the answer is an unequivocal "no." The history of the black community, though sources on it are few and increasingly scarce, continued throughout the twentieth century. Even in 2017, when the total black population constituted less than one percent of the one million total Montanans, those few people, like all others, continue to have a history, a subject that this chapter will revisit. However, the scope of this study does not reach past the early decades of the 1900s. That is a history yet to be written. Instead we will end with what I imagine to be the beginning of that yet-to-be-written history. The final chapter of

²⁴⁷ See African American census data, 2010, available at <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-06.pdf>.

this thesis is the confluence of the various formations of erosion, and the layers of colonial sediments from which that new history must emerge.²⁴⁸

♦ ♦ ♦

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, an anthropologist and historian of the Anthropocene, observed that when writing about a history where the defining characteristic of which is ruination, one must be diligent in pursuing new “arts of noticing.” Tsing argues that one such art of noticing requires the historian to think through *precarity*. Precarity (interchangeable with precariousness),

is the condition of being vulnerable to others. Unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves. Unable to rely on a stable structure of community, we are thrown into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as our others. We can’t rely on the status quo: everything is in flux, including our ability to survive. Thinking through precarity changes social analysis. A precarious world is a world without teleology.²⁴⁹

In many ways, Tsing’s precarity thesis is useful for understanding the history of Montana in the 1920s and 1930s. Events that occurred—shattering the status quo, sending the ecological, economic, and cultural stability of Montana into flux—highlight the challenges that black Montanans confronted.

Montana in Flux, 1917-1930

Because black history is not separate from other, seemingly disjointed narratives in Montana’s past, it is useful to begin with an event that at first glance does not appear

²⁴⁸ Intellectual historians might see such a task as this last chapter as one that seeks to (very) loosely establish a genealogy of settler colonial *dispositif* in Montana’s history. Colonial sedimentation, or at the very least its conceptual scaffolding, shares epistemological roots with Stoler’s *ruination* and *debris*, and thus Foucault’s *dispositif* as well.

²⁴⁹ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.

connected to the story of African Americans at all. In 1909, on the hazy docks of the Dram River in eastern Norway, eighteen-year-old Sven Bauste boarded the *Kristania* bound for Ellis Island. He had spent his entire life in the port city of Drammen before migrating to America. It took seven years for his naturalization to be approved, and in that same year, 1916, Sven applied for 160 acres in Choteau County, Montana. The following February, the young Norwegian American proved up on that piece of north central Montana, and received his patent.²⁵⁰ The land was his, free and clear. For many immigrants in the 1860s onward, Sven Bauste represented the ideal coming to America story. His timing, however, could not have been worse.

In 1917, the year Bauste proved up on his claim, the rain stopped falling from Montana's Big Sky.²⁵¹ Along with Sven, thousands of families fled their rural homes and started fresh in new places. In 1910, 64.5% of Montana's population was rural—or living in a town of 2,500 people or less. Following the drought of 1917-1918, the crash of the homesteading boom, and the statewide depression in the 20s and 30s, the rural population dropped to 56.3% after World War II. While the six largest cities in Montana grew at a rate of 16% from 1910-20, the black population in those same cities fell by 28%. The rise in the urban population in the state's medium sized towns, such as Bozeman, Havre,

²⁵⁰Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records; Washington D.C., USA; *Federal Land Patents, State Volumes* available online at <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=566771&docClass=SER&sid=py1ptgm4.glg>. See also, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925*; Roll #: 2440; Volume #: Roll 2440 - *Certificates: 377350-377849, 08 Mar 1924-10 Mar 1924*.

²⁵¹Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 280.

Miles City, Kalispell, Lewistown, and Livingston, also experienced substantial growth of about 10%; in those communities, the black population fell by 34%.²⁵²

Of the thousands of family farms and homesteads that failed in the wake of drought and the subsequent market crash, roughly 38% of those leaving their rural environs made their way to Montana's cities and towns.²⁵³ This data correlates to the general transition toward a larger urban population mentioned above. Sven Bauste lost his homestead around 1921. Like many others, the thirty year old Norwegian American searched for work in the growing city of Great Falls, the largest urban area in north central Montana. He found employment in another industry that suffered during the period of agricultural tumult. The Park Hotel in downtown Great Falls hired Bauste as a porter.²⁵⁴ Hotels across the state like the Park derived a large portion of their business from agricultural agents who made frequent travels to grain and cattle regions where they made and renewed contracts with farmers, ranchers, and local distributors. During this time, the number of black men working as porters in hotels in Helena, Billings, and Great Falls—the largest agricultural centers—substantially decreased from 1910 through

²⁵² Decreases in rural populations and the decrease of urbanites in the six largest cities by percentage from 1910-1930 reflect that urban population increases occurred in medium-size towns across the state, typically closer to ranching and agricultural areas. Bozeman, Havre, Miles City, Kalispell, Lewistown, and Livingston saw steady increases, representing 5% of the population in 1910 and doubling to 10% by 1950. While African American communities in the six largest cities fell by 27.5% from 1910-1920 (while those cities' experienced an overall growth rate of +16%), the black population of medium-sized towns dropped from 216 to 142 individuals (-34%). Further accentuating the impact of urbanization on black Montanans. For census information on Montana Populations 1900-1950, see U.S. Census Information, "Number of Inhabitants: Montana," (Available online at <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/15276180v2p26ch1.pdf>), For census information for African Americans in Montana, see "Montana African American Heritage Resources," (Available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>). See also, appendix A: 1.1 and 1.2

²⁵³ See appendix B

²⁵⁴ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906 - March 31, 1925*; Roll #: 2440; Volume #: Roll 2440 - *Certificates: 377350-377849, 08 Mar 1924-10 Mar 1924*. Available online at [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

1930.²⁵⁵ Not all, or even a majority, of white homesteaders who moved to cities found work in the hospitality industry. Yet the fact that many men like Sven Bauste did find work in the struggling service sector is quite telling—businesses that had historically employed blacks would open positions to failed homesteaders even as the economy worsened and the black community contracted.

Great Falls and Billings experienced significant economic recoveries in the late 1920s that stemmed from good rains, fertile crops, and record yields even as infamous dust bowl conditions worsened in other regions of the country. Yet, tumultuous labor strife in mining and timber industries continued to have lasting effects in Montana's industrial cities where a majority of African Americans lived.²⁵⁶ Beginning during this time of drought and social tumult, some black Montanans relocated from towns like Helena, Missoula, Butte, and Anaconda to the established black neighborhoods in Great Falls and Billings. Even still, Helena, Missoula, Butte, and Anaconda saw a vastly disproportionate loss of population among the statewide black community. In those cities, issues which this thesis has highlighted—access to unions and jobs, a lack of meaningful political engagement, exclusion from areas of cultural belonging such as the “wilderness experience,” and marriage laws—combined with the crash of the homestead boom to create intensely precarious conditions for African Americans during the third and fourth decades of the century.

²⁵⁵ For information on African American census numbers, 1910 and 1930 see Montana's African American Heritage Resources, “Resources and Research,” (Available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>). See also, appendix A: 1.1

²⁵⁶ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 297.

Mining and Labor Strife

In 1998, Quintard Taylor devoted several paragraphs to the urban black communities of Montana in his survey of African Americans in the West, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*. He discussed Joseph Bass and the *Montana Plaindealer*, a vibrant black middle class, and a non-accommodationist yet still Washingtonian political climate. For Taylor, the narrative ended in two sentences. He wrote, “By 1910 Helena’s prosperous mining days had passed. The town’s population declined by five hundred...but the African American community shrank by half and fell sharply again during the decade of the 1920s.”²⁵⁷ From the vantage of a regional survey, Taylor’s analysis is not wrong. Yet the simplicity of stating that the passing of the mining economy spelled the end for black residents of Helena belies the systemic racism and the precarious state of labor and industry that existed for the western black working class.

Precarity is obvious in the context of black exclusion from the halls of the labor unions that fought for the protection of workers against railroad, timber, and mining corporations like Amalgamated Copper, commonly known as the Anaconda Company. For over a century, industrial capitalism transformed the land, water, and air of Montana. An economy devoted to resource extraction felled forests, dammed rivers, pulled the minerals from the earth, and returned to the environment a never-ending supply of pollutants.²⁵⁸ The working class cities and towns that provided the labor for the expansion

²⁵⁷ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 212.

²⁵⁸ Montana historians Malone, Roeder, and Lang discuss the extractive economy at length in their chapters, “The Mining Frontier,” and “Copper and Politics, 1880-1910,” in Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

of capitalism across the West often bore the brunt of the damage to both the land and human bodies. Mitigating these risks of overwork or dangerous conditions fell to the various labor unions. The unions used the solidarity of their members to bargain for better pay, hours, working conditions, and for union recognition. Individual miners, loggers, smeltermen, and rail workers were subsumed into the union, and thus were abstracted into one of the most recognizable kinds of social bodies.

In Montana, especially from statehood in 1889 until the interwar period, the population was among the most ethnically diverse in the nation. As such, unions were forced to contend with the racial difference amongst their members in the process of creating sameness in the collective. The result was a heavily “raced” social body that often openly held up whiteness as a qualifying attribute, one that formed the dominant hierarchy.²⁵⁹ The variety of racial inclusion and exclusion ranged from the total omission of black and Asian workers early on, to different European groups being marginalized or elevated to leadership based on ethnicity. Similarly, the threats to health corresponded to the level of danger inherent in the job, often linked to status within the union.²⁶⁰

The cities of Butte and Anaconda stood as the models for the total domination and struggle between the unions and the company. Anaconda was conceived of and built as the company town of the namesake copper producer, the world’s largest. From 1883 and the town’s founding until smelting operations ceased at the Washoe Smelter in 1980, the two most dominant social forces remained the Anaconda Company and the various unions which represented a majority of workers. Its unions denied African Americans

²⁵⁹ Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor Community, and Culture in Montana’s Smelter City* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 14.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

membership for several decades. However, unlike the Irish-controlled locals in Butte that prevented blacks from working in the mines, Anaconda unions did not fight for the total exclusion of black smeltermen.²⁶¹ In 1910, twenty-seven African American men were employed by the Company in various positions.²⁶² They labored outside of the union, and thus their welfare was not the concern of those in union leadership.

In an interview conducted by the historian Laurie Mercier in 1982, a retired white smelter worker recalled the interwar years in which he understood the black smeltermen to work only the jobs that whites did not want.²⁶³ These positions were undesirable precisely for the dirty and dangerous nature of the work. Working on the airline in the reduction facilities was grueling and left the laborer vulnerable to physical injury as well as to airborne pollutants that could lead to silicosis. Remarkably, prevailing racist conceptions of health often led many white smeltermen to believe that black workers were less at risk to health hazards. Blackness, in their minds, constituted an inherent dirtiness that protected black bodies from the risks that many whites were unwilling to take.²⁶⁴

Black men in the smelters of Anaconda and Great Falls, for instance, faced the full force of corporate disregard for their safety. In this way, a precarity manifested itself in the very bodies of black Montanans working in these industries in the early decades of the twentieth century. The data as to exact extent of harm inflicted on black smelter

²⁶¹ Ibid., 235n 63.

²⁶² For occupation statistics for Anaconda 1910-1930, see, <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

²⁶³ Frank Zogart, interview by Laurie Mercier, November 18, 1982, Tape II Side A (89-117), accessed at Montana Historical Society, OH-411.

²⁶⁴ This is also a feeling that Frank Zogart alludes to in his 1982 interview (see above note).

workers is unknown, but the early 1950s study by Dr. W. C. Hueper of the National Cancer Institute “revealed that Deer Lodge County had the greatest death rate in the state from lung cancer, more than thirteen times higher than the national average, and one of the highest rates in the nation.”²⁶⁵ The black Montanans working for the Anaconda Company almost exclusively occupied the most dangerous and unhealthiest positions within this system.

Eroding the Neighborhood

Quintard Taylor placed substantial importance on the slump of the mining economy as an explanation of the disappearance of Helena’s black community. However, even after uncovering the suffocating layers of racism implicit in Montana’s early resource extraction economy, this explanation alone is still insufficient. Some cities saw a gradual decrease in the black population despite decades of steady growth and new industries. In Billings, blacks lived almost exclusively in the triangular Southside neighborhood.²⁶⁶ The story of that city’s black community is entangled with the turbulent history of industrial capitalism. The establishment, growth, stability, and eventual decline of black Billings occurred as south central Montana experienced the steady growth of the railroads, mining, and eventually oil production.

Along the Yellowstone River, Billings grew in anticipation of the arrival of the railroad in 1882. The railroad camp that stood between the town and the river was little

²⁶⁵ Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor Community, and Culture in Montana’s Smelter City* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 108.

²⁶⁶ For neighborhood and geographic information see, “Mapping Historic Neighborhoods,” Billings, available online at, <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/Places/Sanborns>.

more than a shanty town of mud paths and tents. When Walker Browning, a black man from Missouri, arrived with railroad laborers, he became one of the first to make the area between the Billings and the river his permanent home. Browning had moved his wife, children, and young siblings from Missouri to Omaha, to Laramie, then to Deadwood, and finally to Miles City with the Northern Pacific. By 1882, he decided that Billings would be the end of his travels.²⁶⁷ Unable to secure land in the overpriced market under the influence of western speculators, Browning instead began building his one and a half story wood frame home amidst the laborers' tents south of the tracks.²⁶⁸ By the time the Browning home was finished in 1883, and with Ruth Browning the rest of the family moved in, other black rail workers also began building homes around Walker and his family.²⁶⁹

The early black community, Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese workers, along with poorer whites, established the Southside neighborhood as the railroad continued its westward march. The importance of this neighborhood cannot be overstated. Though it is also likely that racist housing practices existed within the Billings real estate market which prevented black families from establishing themselves in other parts of town, the Southside nevertheless took on real significance for the cultural life of African Americans. As the community grew in the early 1910s, black worshipers decided that they should pursue the establishment of a neighborhood church. Most of the black

²⁶⁷ Anthony Wood, "Mrs. Browning's Furnished Rooms," *Montana Historic Property Record Form* (prepared 8/17/2015), available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/PropertyRecords/24YL2046.pdf>

²⁶⁸ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987), 61-62.

²⁶⁹ For neighborhood and geographic information see, "Mapping Historic Neighborhoods," Billings, available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/Places/Sanborns>.

community at the time attended the Methodist Episcopal Church downtown. Though the denomination nationwide tended to be far more open to black participation, certain leadership roles in a white church body were still segregated. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, whose roots went deep into the heart of the Old South and the legacy of slavery and slave agency, became the most prominent black church in the West around the turn of the century.²⁷⁰

Several prominent black families in Billings—including those of William McCabe and Horace Bivins, famed Calvary officers of the Spanish American War—led the push for a new AME Church in Billings.²⁷¹ Plans were made to construct a new building, even going as far as to draft blueprints of a stunning neo-gothic sanctuary, images of which still hang in the Montana State Historic Preservation Offices. However, funds were low and the congregational leadership, now including the aging patriarch of Billings, Walker Browning, sought instead to purchase a church. A large salt-box style warehouse building was secured in 1917 with plans to convert it into a new sanctuary. However, at the time it stood some seventeen blocks north of the railroad tracks, more than a mile from every member of its future congregation. In one of the most stirring and forgotten moments in Montana history, the black community moved the building, intact, on what was most likely log rollers, south across the Northern Pacific tracks, and to its final location at 402 South 25th Street, in the heart of Southside neighborhood.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ For more information on African American Churches in Montana, see, Anthony Wood, “African American Churches of Montana,” *Montana Historical Society* 2015, available online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/History/AfricanAmericanChurches>

²⁷¹ “Noted Bishop to Dedicate Church,” *Billings Gazette*, July 23, 1909, page 3; see also, Susan Olp, “Wayman Chapel’s Roots Go Way Back,” *Billings Gazette*, September 8, 2006.

²⁷² Anthony Wood, “Wayman Chapel,” *Montana Historic Property Record Form* (prepared 8/17/2015), available online at

Significant challenges for the Billings community intensified toward mid-century.

The railroad, which had brought so many early blacks to the area, quickly became a formidable barrier to everyday life. Early on, no school operated on the Southside, and though there were schools not far north of the tracks, no overpass existed between the two neighborhoods. Southside residents, both white and black, frequently complained of the morning trains blocking the way to the rest of Billings, as well as the inherent dangers of making young children walk across the rail yards each day. This issue (much like in Linda Brown's neighborhood in Topeka, Kansas in 1954) animated much of the neighborhood's local politics, often pushed by occasional black aldermen, and often ignored by the rest of Billings.²⁷³ Leading up to a pedestrian overpass being built late in 1939, local papers increasingly published sensationalized pieces on "black" crime.²⁷⁴ Billings is the only example of an unspoken attempt to confine the black community, whose members mostly labored in the white neighborhoods and downtown in service, domestic, and hospitality industries. Though the black community largely embraced a sense of neighborhood pride, the industries that fueled the growth of the city at large detracted from the health and safety of black Billings.

<http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/PropertyRecords/24YL2047.pdf>

<http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/PropertyRecords/24YL2047.pdf>

²⁷³ "Projects Get Consideration, Plan to Call Meeting to Sound out Opinions," Billings Gazette, July 12, 1935, page 1; "City Projects are Discussed," Billings Gazette, August 31, 1938, page 5; "Municipal Building Programs Highlights Review of City's Affairs for last 12 Months," Billings Gazette, January 1, 1939.

²⁷⁴ For several examples of Billings papers tying crime with the South side and minorities, see, "Mexican Charged with Annoying Girl, Dismissed," Billings Gazette, January 13, 1914. This article actual states that while attempting to hold up three black men in the South side neighborhood, one man, Otto Mason, shot the "Mexican, wounding him." They go on to note that the black man served one year in prison. See also, "Charge Vagrancy," Billings Gazette, February 9, 1924, page 2; "Chink 'Doctor' is Caught in Dope Dragnet," Billings Gazette, March 23, 1924, page 10.

One development in particular came to endanger the black community in Billings more than any other. By the 1920s, another product made use of the transcontinental lines that had first transported settlers, then mineral ore, as well as grain and food stuffs from Montana's emerging agricultural centers. Rich oil deposits from across central and eastern Montana needed to be refined and transported to booming markets throughout the country. The first refinery opened in Billings in 1921 directly adjacent to the Southside neighborhood.²⁷⁵ For the next century, oil companies would continue to open and expand their operations within blocks of the black community. For decades, pollutants leached into the Yegan Ditch, which ran from nearby fields to the Yellowstone River and which provided a water source for some Southside residents in the early years.²⁷⁶ The air, already defiled by the railroad yard upwind, now absorbed black smoke from huge oil refineries. Despite such environmental racism, the black community in Billings remained longer than all other cities in Montana, save Great Falls, whose proximity to Malstrom Air Force base provided a steady stream of black airmen and their families throughout the twentieth century. By mid-century, however, black Billings largely went the way of other African American neighborhoods, its population slowly draining away, with few new arrivals to revitalize the community.

This trend suggests something remarkable about the society that the settler project created in Montana by the 1920s and 1930s. In reaction to the unbearable oppression of the Jim Crow South, the Great Migration was in full swing by October 1929. While

²⁷⁵ Joseph M. Ashely, "Montana's Refining Industry: Part I 1920-1941." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 48;1 (Winter, 1998), 22.

²⁷⁶ Montana Department of Environmental Quality, "Yale Oil of South Dakota-Billings Facility," Data and Resources available online at <http://deq.mt.gov/Land/statesuperfund/yaleoilsd>.

northern industrial cities like New York and Chicago reeled from the crash of the stock market and the Great Depression, black Southerners, at least those who could afford it, increasingly looked west to California, Oregon, and Washington especially.²⁷⁷

Precarity in the New Deal Era and Beyond

As this thesis has argued, the settler project was not a uniform, homogeneous, or predestined event. At best, it was fragmented and uneven. For this reason, by the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, black Southerners, and black Montanans themselves, undeniably saw a better future for themselves in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Tacoma, Spokane, and Seattle than any city in Montana. Each chapter in this thesis has provided part of answer to why this was the case. Just as the state recovered from its most severe draught in decades and the future of black Montana struggled beneath compounding layers of colonial racism, these same circumstances deterred the wave of emigration that was primed to crest on northern and west coast cities in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the preceding decade, the depression of 1918-1922 had already stunted the growth and expansion of Montana's agricultural industry by the time the Great Depression fully bore down on Montana's extractive resource economy. By 1931, prices for copper and timber had dropped significantly and western production was substantially curtailed.²⁷⁸ With the election of Roosevelt and the implementation of New Deal

²⁷⁷ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 223.

²⁷⁸ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries, revised edition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 293.

programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Projects Administration, Montana launched into a period of increased federal involvement in national parks, and national forests and other public lands. While jobs building trails and paving highways as well as and other infrastructure projects provided jobs for tens of thousands of workers, a majority of the state's New Deal funds went to rebuild Montana's agriculture.²⁷⁹ With dustbowl conditions gripping the middle of the continent, most monies designated to Montana aimed to take advantage of wetter weather and better growing conditions by the mid-1930s.²⁸⁰

Farms and old homesteads were, of course, almost exclusively in the hands of whites. Black Montanans who stayed through the twenties and thirties would have seen Montana's New Deal programs insufficient at best. CCC fire crews hired hundreds of blacks, though only a handful were Montanans. One CCC forester recalled the black workers as a hardworking and friendly bunch, but somewhat unused to roughing it in the mountains and forests as they were all from crews stationed in Tennessee and other southern states.²⁸¹ While federal money attempted to stimulate the stagnant economy, more black Montanans, along with African Americans from the east, increasingly moved to Los Angeles, Oakland, Portland, or Seattle where the New Deal fed leftist politics and greatly benefited black westerners in those cities.

²⁷⁹ Michael J. Ober, "The CCC Experience in Glacier National Park," in *The Montana Heritage: An Anthology of Historical Essays*, eds. Robert Swartout, Jr. and Harry W. Fritz, (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1992), 199-211.

²⁸⁰ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 297.

²⁸¹ Charles McDonald, interview by Laurie Mercier, November 18, 1982, Tape II Side B (50-60), accessed at Montana Historical Society, OH-262.

Quintard Taylor notes that African Americans in other parts of the country, especially Texas, found gaining access to WPA or CCC jobs fraught with racism and in some cases completely hopeless.²⁸² However, western cities from Denver to Seattle to Los Angeles saw a boon to the black community during the New Deal era. Much of the success that these western states saw came directly from a dynamic that had already been suffocated in Montana, the cooperation between blacks and leftist labor unions.²⁸³ Black Montanans had tried and failed for decades to align their politics with labor and to carve out a political niche for themselves. By the 1930s when many blacks across the west turned to the new Democratic Party for representation, too few African Americans remained in Montana to forge that relationship, and too many of those bridges already had been burnt.²⁸⁴ The situation in states like Washington and Oregon was almost the opposite. The Washington and Oregon Commonwealth federations (the WCF and OCF), representing the liberal arm of the Democratic Party, openly embraced and aided black political organizations and the NAACP while pushing to abolish discriminatory pay scales and other racist policies in those states.²⁸⁵ Compare this to Montana, where the most politically active black group, the Montana State Federation of Colored Women Clubs, received only marginal support from liberals.²⁸⁶ In many ways, the successful

²⁸² Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 228-229.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 231.

²⁸⁴ I present this argument in detail in chapter two, "The Washingtonian West."

²⁸⁵ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 231.

²⁸⁶ The Montana Federation of Colored Women's Clubs is one of the most consistently studied topics in the state's black history. The archive of this fascinating organization is held at the Montana Historical Society. Historians there have written on the MSFCWC extensively, for an overview of that scholarship, see, "'Lifting as We Climb': The Activism of the Montana Federation of Colored Women's Clubs," *Women's History Matters* (July 1, 2014), accessed online at

activism of African Americans in other western states played a role in attracting black Montanans away from a society that at every turn made it clear they were not welcome.

Anti-black conditions created by the afterlife of the colonial project continued after the New Deal had made its unequivocal mark on Montana and its economy. The western-most city with a relatively large black population in the early twentieth century, Missoula, tells a story of erosion somewhat different from the rest of the state. In 1930, before the timber industry weathered a sustained period of turmoil, the black population there had fallen little compared to the decimated communities in Butte, Helena, Havre, and Miles City, for instance.²⁸⁷ But throughout the next two or three decades, Missoula—and western Montana at large—would be profoundly remade by the increased role of the federal government in the management of the public lands and forests which comprised most of the western third of the state.

An argument can be made that the increased scope of federal oversight and the cultural ties that formed between Montanans and their public lands is one of the defining factors in the development of Montana. As this process only truly began in the early 1900s, in many ways Montana is the standard for twentieth century state development. It is the century in which Montanans formed their identities through many trials. During the 1930s and 1940s, Montana was the only state in the Union to actually experience a population loss. The people who toughed it out, or stickers, as Wallace Stegner referred to them, formed intense networks of kinship and support with their fellow Montanans and sought to reshape the future of their state. Perhaps the best example of this force was the

<http://montanawomenshistory.org/lifting-as-we-climb-the-activism-of-the-montana-federation-of-colored-womens-clubs/>, accessed January 29, 2018.

²⁸⁷ See appendix A: 1.1

constitutional convention of 1972, in which the 1889 constitution was thrown out and a new governing document was written and ratified in June of that year.²⁸⁸ Among the document's many remarkable qualities, one garners the most attention and relays a singular Montana character. Article II, Section 3 states that, "all persons are born free and have certain inalienable rights," which "includes the right to a clean and healthful environment."²⁸⁹

Though the opening lines of Article II Section 3 reference that all men are born free, harkening back to both the 13th Amendment as well as mid-19th century West's place in the "free land, free men" ideology of the Republican party during the end of the Civil War and the founding of Montana Territory in 1864, the origins of environmental protection were steeped in colonial history. The right to a clean and healthful environment stems from different chapters in Montana's past. It comes in part from earliest days of exploration and settlement, when the territory was the great wilderness that promised to remake the sickly city dweller into the individualistic and democratic American man. It refers to the environmental damage that extractive mining and industrial capitalism wreaked on the state for almost a century with little to no accountability. It refers to the increased role in the federal and state governments to manage and protect, in the words of the 1972 preamble, "the quiet beauty of our state and

²⁸⁸ This document is also remarkable for the nature in which it was written. Beyond the plain-language approach, committees consisted of people of many backgrounds, with relatively few having experience in constitutional law or backgrounds as lifetime politicians. The result is a document that many have noted represents an distinct character of Montana and its cultural memory. Historian Cody Ferguson examined this moment in Montana's history in "Beyond Oro Y Plata: The 1917-19172 Montana State Constitution," *Hon. Thesis*, Carroll College, 2001.

²⁸⁹ Montana State Constitution, Article II, Section 3.

the grandeur of our mountains.”²⁹⁰ And it refers to the dedication of Montanans to that conservation ethic, born a half century before those words were written. But as this thesis has argued, each one of those historical developments or moments was inextricably tangled with issues of race, whiteness, and belonging. In this way, even Montana’s new constitution is a colonial document, bearing witness to the past and present sedimentation of the settler state.

In Missoula, a city that would become a hub for state and federal land management work, the profusion of new jobs in conservation gave little to no help to a black community that was already weighing its options and considering a future elsewhere. Of the thousands of state and federal employees hired to run the expanded vision of government, only one known person was black. Raymond Johnson, who grew up in Missoula in the early 1900s when the black community there was at its zenith, became the first black Montanan to work for the Forest Service. The precedent of black federal soldiers manning posts and operations in the early days of Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks had been all but forgotten. Johnson, recalled no other black

²⁹⁰ These words from the preamble of the Montana state constitution speak to a latent understanding of land ownership, not thanking God for the grandeur of *the* mountains, but of *our* mountains. More than just the possessive inflection of the phrasing, the refrain is meant to recall the words of various national anthems, “America, The Beautiful,” most notably. Historian Mark Fiege has suggested that African Americans—especially after emancipation—also cultivated and sang national anthems. However, whereas white anthems are often laden with the imagery of land ownership and conquest, black anthems like “Lift Every Voice and Sing” only reference conquest as the conquest over the foes of liberty. Instead, the environment, Fiege argues, offers “redemption in an awesome providential landscape,” rather than some place to be settled. See, Mark Fiege, *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2012), 331.

Forest Service workers in the state in 1979, when he was interviewed by Quintard Taylor.²⁹¹

Even new movements in state history are subject to designs of imperial formations and are necessarily born among the sediments of Montana's racial past. In the case of the management of federal and state lands, conservation ideologies which would dominate those professions were forged in part by racist beliefs espoused by the conservationists of the early twentieth century. In spite of the fact that men like William Johnson could tie the black conservation and wilderness ethic all the way back to earliest days of non-indigenous peoples in the area via York, mountain man Jim Beckwourth, or the Buffalo Soldiers, the management of Montana's natural resources continued apace as an almost unflinchingly white movement in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

As the beginning of this chapter addressed, the history of black Montanans does not end with the majority of the population slowly migrating to other states. This study simply attempts to unearth the relevant factors that led to Montana being the least black state in America by the early decades of the twenty-first century. The history of black Montana, which continued to form and struggle with the society and culture of the Last Best Place, is bound to the afterlife of U.S. colonialism, the theft of native lands, and the genocide of its people. It began as York first saw its mountains and plains—and the people who lived with that landscape. In a migration that has become all but invisible to

²⁹¹ Raymond Johnson, interview by Quintard Taylor, "Raymond Johnson." March 3, 1974. Spokane, Wash: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002.

present day observers, black Montanans became entangled with the project of settlement as thousands moved west to build railroads, defend Army forts, pan its rivers, fell its forests, and support its communities. All these developments occurred in accordance to the initial goal of the settler state. However, the creation of that state had long operated as a racially defined project—one that would be complicated by the agency of black settlers.

Once physically established in Montana, African Americans sought to carve out a better life for themselves culturally, socially, and politically. Initially, many new-comers championed home ownership and steady employment, as well as access to integrated public education by 1880s as the surest way to secure racial equality. However, unlike other regions of the country after the sabotage of Reconstruction, Montana at first appeared willing to embrace the black community civically. Black men peacefully enjoyed the right of suffrage and voted en masse, several even being propelled into office with the support of white Republicans. Moreover, the ability to engage both their community as well as the society at large politically led to a unique push to establish a real western black political agenda that did more than toe the Republican Party line. The early settler state in this fashion became a laboratory of black agency in Montana. However, even as new and exciting steps were being taken by the black community, the standard of whiteness held by settler societies weighed heavily against black Montanans as they sought to be recognized as members of the both the body politic, as well as the social body of the state.

Culturally, even when black Montanans possessed legitimate and historical ties to a founding piece of Montanans' collective identity and the state's relationship with nature

and the environment, the movement that championed that ideology excluded African Americans both from their leadership and from their cultural memory. The views held by many conservationists in the early twentieth century in Montana and across the nation were undeniably colored by racialized understandings of the body, the environment, the “nation,” and who their movement was intended to benefit. In Montana, a clear logic of settlement fostered conservationist approaches about which resources should be preserved and why. The magpie in the early 1900s was both a material example of a native species slotted for total destruction by conservationists, as well as a serendipitous analogy for how whites conceived of the relationship between blacks and the environment. However, the actual black environmental experience thoroughly subverted those misconceptions. Though black Montanans in many cases pioneered the region’s first outdoor exploits and continued to maintain and foster the black wilderness ethic well into the twentieth century, their exclusion from our cultural memory of that aspect of Montana’s past is testament to the effectiveness of colonial erosion.

The effects of erosion and the sedimented afterlife of colonial violence and dispossession reach well beyond how we remember certain eras or events. Montanans after the turn of the century contended with a variety of compounding racist policies implemented by the state and upheld by the federal government. Few extended as far from the very heart of colonial power to affect the everyday lives of black Montanans as did the 1909 ban on interracial marriage. At a moment when young single African Americans represented the largest group of black Montanans to leave the state between 1910 and 1930, those who remained were made painfully aware of the degree to which

white Montanans believed they were unfit for integration into their families, communities, and state. Black Montanans already married to whites moved away in startling numbers. A future in Montana for interracial couples or their children was in question and those doubts now carried with it the weight of law.



By 1998, when historian Quintard Taylor wrote the first comprehensive survey of black western history, the richness and vibrancy of black communities that exist in so many dusty archival boxes continues in only a small handful of western cities. In many ways, Taylor set out to rescue western black history, a project he very appropriately titled *In Search of the Racial Frontier*. Once found, the next logical step is to understand why it needed to be searched for in the first place. What made it difficult to see?

The paradox of westward expansion was that in the process of settling the region and dispossessing Native peoples of their lands, the settler state provided communities of color the chance to exercise a self-determinate path that might lead to peace and freedom on a new racial frontier. The colonial sediments that this study seeks to bring to light attest to the entanglements of race and region. The origins of Montana—as a state as well as the place that informed the identity of millions of Montanans of all races since 1889—are rooted in the goals of U.S. expansionism. Its founding myths are based on individuals or events that conformed to the standard of whiteness implicit in the settler project. These origins, myths, legends, and the overall sense of one’s self as a Montanan proliferates cultural memory even today because—and in spite of the events that took place in the state’s past. Examining Montana in this way unearths the racial dynamic that runs deep

through its history, how racist individuals and societal structures sought to displace communities of color, and how that history is manifested in the erosion of racial frontier.

EPILOGUE

BLACK MONTANA'S CRITIQUE OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

Rose Gordon wrote of her mother Annie, a former slave, that when she came up the Missouri onboard a steamboat and disembarked in north central Montana in the 1880s, she was terrified of the Native Americans she met. According to her daughter, she watched in terror as bands of “warriors,” in feathers and regalia, lined the banks near Fort Benton as their boat stalled from time to time on sand bars. She spoke to another black passenger who had spent some time in the territory already and explained how she would be at ease knowing that she was not staying here, where so many Indians lived. The black woman cried out in the language of the day, “Laws a massy!”, and informed Annie that there were “lots of those folks [where she was going] and there is some fine folks among them.”²⁹² Annie and her daughter Rose Gordon’s relationship with the Indigenous peoples of Montana remained a fixture in the ways they retold their origin stories for years after. Annie responded in shock when her husband, also African American, returned one day to their cabin with several Crow women whom he called his “squaws.” Rose Gordon’s telling of this event leaves some unanswered questions regarding the exact nature of the relationship between the women and her father, but she does claim that her mother soon got used to their presence around the home.²⁹³

²⁹² Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days* (unpublished manuscript) located in the Montana Historical Society Archives, MC 150, 11-2.

²⁹³ Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days* (unpublished manuscript) located in the Montana Historical Society Archives, MC 150, 11-2.

Equally interesting, when Rose recounted the story of her birth, she proclaimed more than once that she was the first white child born in the camp, as all others were Indian children up until that point. Later, as she wrote and rewrote that vignette for papers, articles, and later a draft of her autobiography, she also included that it was the white settlers themselves who called her the first white child, even as they chuckled at the paradox.²⁹⁴ Significantly, in her nearly two hundred-page autobiography, this is the only instance in which she calls herself white. In fact, she often remarks on her struggles in life because she is not white, in every other circumstance except her birth. The racial legacy of Montana is one in which the complexities of settler society are obscured and hidden. Why was Rose Gordon a white settler when she was born among Native peoples, but black amongst white settlers? While this thesis has not made it its goal to discuss the historical relationship between blacks and natives in Montana, it has sought to expand the settler colonial framework in such a way so that we might be able to answer the curious question of Rose Gordon's white birth and black life, as well as a host of other questions that stem from the racial history of Montana.

In settler colonial frameworks, race, and specifically blackness, typically serves as the foil by which we can come to understand the nature of white/indigenous interactions. Patrick Wolfe explains this using the example of blood. Racialized in a system of labor in which African descent is commodified, the infamous "one drop rule" subjects all blacks to the system of slavery, thus expanding the commodity of unfree labor.²⁹⁵ Blackness is an expanding definition perpetually moving away from whiteness. Conversely, consider

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4 (December, 2006), 387-388.

the (il)logic of Native American blood quantum laws, wherein any white ancestry incrementally reduces the amount of “native-ness” until the point at which the individual is no longer eligible for participation in the tribe and its benefits, protections, and rights, including claims to land. Therefore “blood” represents the divergent racial legacies of African Americans and Native Americans in the settler society. Even so, the relationship between the two has always been argued as complementary. Indigenous peoples are removed from the land so that Africans can be enslaved and brought in to enrich white colonizers.

We now see the rigid taxonomies that define how permanent blackness constitutes slavery in that system, and the way in which the elimination of the native remains the ultimate goal of the settler state. Against the backdrop of no white children, and only Natives in the process of dispossession, Rose Gordon was keenly aware, both as a child, and then as an adult looking back, that her identity as non-Native was significant in the world into which she was born. Her world was in a (problematically) abstract sense, a binary one, split between those being dispossessed, and those dispossessing. What Rose Gordon did not understand fully as a child, however, was that her very presence represented a complication—a subversion—to the society. She was not Native. This she understood. In relation to whites, she was not white. This she came to understand. And she was black, but not a slave like her mother, and this fact she learned listening to painful family histories, especially stories of families split and sold apart.²⁹⁶ Rose Gordon and the thousands of other black Montanans lived in a region where the elimination of the

²⁹⁶ Rose Gordon, *Gone are the Days* (unpublished manuscript) located in the Montana Historical Society Archives, MC 150, 11-2.

Native was ongoing, and the system of chattel labor in the form of sharecropping and Jim Crow structures in the South did not continue the commodification of the black body within her community.

Wolfe argues that his theory of elimination can exist in a realm of exterior duality, wherein an interior view of appropriation may well reveal a multiplicity of cultures and ethnicities, but from an exterior position, there only exists whiteness and the ongoing elimination of the native.²⁹⁷ His argument, however, accounts for blackness only insofar as it represents the foil to the formula of elimination, and necessarily within the system of slavery. Historian Justin Leroy argues that even Wolfe's conception of slavery and settler colonialism subscribes to such depths of theoretical exceptionalism that it has reached an impasse with black studies that also see their theoretical concepts as exceptional and incompatible with settler colonialism.²⁹⁸ Opposed to those in the South, I suggest that African Americans in the West, occupying the same social space where dispossession was ongoing—perpetually non-white and non-Native—presented the settler colonial project an unexpected obstacle. Freed blacks, as well as Chinese and other Asian communities that had managed to escape the oppression of forced labor over time, became pebbles in the cogs. Further studies of American Western settler colonialism will inevitably come up against these variations of defiance against settler teleology. How did the settler state respond to the Chinese population once their utility as (practically) unfree labor came to an end in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? The very fact

²⁹⁷ Patrick Wolfe, "Recuperating Binarism: a Heretical Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* Vol. 3, Iss. 3-04 (2013), 257-279.

²⁹⁸ Justin Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism," *Theory and Event* 19:4 (2016).

that the Chinese once lived in mining and railroad camps as de facto slaves suggests that Wolfe's theory of slavery within the settler state is evident in the early western Chinese experience.

Yet what happened to the Chinese and other Asian peoples once that utility ran its course? Historian Jean Pfaelzer argues that it was precisely at this critical juncture, decades before Chinese Americans were granted the right to become citizens during WWII, when the state began a campaign to remove all Chinese workers living along the West Coast. Her study, *Driven Out*, chronicles the events of removal ranging from forced deportation to outright genocide.²⁹⁹ This begs the question: Why was the Chinese settler experience different from that of African Americans? The level of "national" protection under the law is of key importance here. While African Americans surely have never enjoyed the full status of their citizenship, even the thin veil of constitutional protection provided by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments mattered within a system where the removal of a population necessarily contended with the laws of the Constitution. Here we can visualize the level of state protection granted to non-white peoples in the West beyond the long arm of the South. Black citizens, while persecuted and profiled, were citizens at least in title. Chinese laborers were not only perpetually non-white, but much like Indigenous peoples, they were also perpetually non-citizens, non-Native, and non-sovereign in a state that aspired to whiteness.

The idea that state protection—however much a bureaucratic façade—actually shields communities from destruction or removal is no more evident than in the case of

²⁹⁹ Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007).

Europe during the Holocaust. Timothy Snyder posits that the true horrors of genocide took place within zones of double state destruction. Countries like Latvia and Lithuania, whose governments had been toppled first by the Russians, then again by the advancing forces of the Third Reich, could provide no shelter for their Jewish populations, who suffered the greatest loss of life. Conversely, and against common knowledge, German Jews largely survived the Holocaust. Their thin level of state protection, which was constituted of their citizenship in name only, actually proved to be sufficient cover for many German Jews to avoid the impromptu slaughter that accounted for most of the deaths of European Jews. Compared to the pogroms at the hands of the Russians, Germans, and other local countrymen, wherein over ninety per cent of the Holocaust victims died in the mass graves, buildings, or in the streets of cities whose government had been dissolved twice over, only a fraction died in concentration camps in Germany itself.³⁰⁰

In the American West, the removal of the larger black community was stalled by their status as citizens in ways that the Chinese project of removal was not. Further, the continued presence of black communities across the West suggests that more than a temporary hurdle, the black western experience in many ways subverted whole aspects of the colonial project. Many American institutions retain key elements of the racial regime established to discipline the social body toward an American idealism. For that reason, the civil rights of those deemed outside the ideal stands as an incomplete but substantial impediment to complete racial supremacy. If the pursuit of civil rights manages to save

³⁰⁰ Timothy Snyder, *The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015).

the soul of the nation, then it will only do so by dismantling social structures of white supremacy. Historians and scholars should revisit the fight for Civil Rights in the West, primarily California, Oregon, and Washington, where black communities survived in spite of the settler project. Patrick Wolfe, Lorenzo Veracini, and others argue that settler states are by their definition racial regimes, and thus we must ask, does a greater subversion to that goal exist than racial equality?

Understandably, so much attention thus far in the scholarship continues to focus on the elimination of Native peoples. The history of black Montana demonstrates that colonial legacies die hard. Both Indigenous and settler colonial scholars are agreed on the necessity of native voices and experiences being the driving force behind settler narratives. African Americans, conversely, are part of a group Veracini defines as the “degraded exogenous others.”³⁰¹ From this perspective, it is unclear what agency they possess in the scheme of the colonial project at all. A secondary goal of this study has been to illustrate that this subgroup is not a population to be defined and then stowed away, somewhat out of sight of the white/indigenous binary. Instead, the agency and voices of these populations, of which African Americans constitute a prime example, are vital to any analysis of settler societies because they speak to history that becomes so difficult to see.

♦ ♦ ♦

The cultural landscape of our present reveals a great deal about our past. If you were to drive north from I-90 just east of Livingston, Montana, along Highway 89, you

³⁰¹ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 19-25.

would eventually come to the little town of White Sulphur Springs. It was in this sleepy town in central Montana where Rose Gordon and her family moved when she was a child, and where she lived the rest of her life. It is where she wrote stories of her mother's life in slavery in the South. It is where she fell in love with the mountains and saw in the different flowers the equality of all people, not surprising coming from a woman named Rose. And it was in this little town that she fed the citizens of White Sulphur Springs from the kitchen of Rose's Café. If you parked your car along main street and walked through town looking for the building that once housed Rose's Café, you would not find it. If you wandered up the hill to the location where the Gordon home was built over a century ago, you would not find it. Like many of the buildings and houses that were once home to the black community of Helena, the subject which opened this thesis, the cultural resources of the black community in White Sulphur Springs are now completely gone and largely eroded from memory.

An overwhelming amount of the research conducted for this thesis began with a name and an address. Stories of individuals, families, and communities flowed first from the census, then to city directories, and then to newspapers. At times the archive reluctantly yielded the names of relatives, and on to surviving descendants, some of whom provided pictures and photo albums along with their stories which held the names more peoples and where they lived, and on, and on, and on. This project, which began my interest in this history, came to uncover the lives and stories of thousands of black Montanans—histories that were buried beneath a century of colonial sediments. The goal of *Montana's African American Heritage Places Project* was to find and preserve the

remaining places of significance to the historic black community and to use those places to tell the stories of their lives in Montana. But what of the nearly eighty percent of black homes and business that no longer remain? What of their stories?

We might rightly fear what will become the history associated with the multitude of leveled buildings. Yet, a great deal is still known about the life of Rose Gordon. She is one of the most remarkable people in Montana's rich history. Why? She lived in a remote pocket of the state, where the black community quickly faded around her. She never married. She did not scandalize her fellow Montanans as a black woman who owned a restaurant. Nor is she remarkable for any of her other professional or literary exploits, of which there are many. And indeed she is not even remarkable for her famous brother, Taylor Gordon, whose singing career and best-selling novel made him Montana's most well-known African American native. Rose Gordon is remarkable precisely because she is Rose Gordon, and historians are able to remark about her. More boxes of documents, letters, books, drafts, finances, recipes, and poetry have been preserved and archived around the life of this one single woman than (dare I say) all other black Montanans combined. Rose Gordon saved everything. Even as her home and café were eventually leveled, she preserved the record of her life in this place and in doing so she subverted a foundational goal of the settler state in which she lived, to erode the memory of black Montana.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Censuses

U.S. Federal Census, 1870, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

City Directories

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Anaconda (Deer Lodge, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1902, 1905, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1915, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1925, 1928, 1930, 1936, and 1939.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Billings (Yellowstone County, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1901, 1903, 1905, 1909, 1912, 1913, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1925, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1937, and 1944.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Butte (Silver Bow, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1884, 1890, 1893, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1923, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Bozeman (Gallatin, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1902, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1912, 1914, 1916, 1918, 1922, 1925, 1927, 1929, 1931, 1933, and 1935.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Great Falls (Cascade, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1903-1959. 1903, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1918, 1919, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1937, and 1940.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Helena (Lewis and Clark, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1920, 1922, 1927, 1931, 1933, 1935, and 1941.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Miles City (Custer, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1909, 1912, 1914, 1916, 1923, 1927, and 1930.

R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's *Missoula (Missoula, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1901, 1903, 1905, 1907, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1925, 1917, 1922, 1925, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1932, 1934, 1938, and 1940.

Interviews

"Black Oral History Interviews, 1972-1974." Accession No.: 78-3 Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries.

Banks, A.E. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Helena, MT. July 21, 1973.

Duncan, Armeta. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Butte, MT. April 4, 1974.

Duncan, Walter. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Butte, MT. April 3, 1974.

Johnson, Raymond. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Missoula, MT. March 3, 1974.

Knott, William. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Great Falls, MT. May 2, 1974.

Monroe, Ethel. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Missoula, MT. April 5, 1974.

Walker, Thomas, Ophelia Walker. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. Black Oral History Interviews. Anaconda, MT. July 4, 1974.

Montana Historical Society Collections

Manuscript Collections

"Charles Benton Power Papers." MC55a box 8-9.

"Emmanuel Taylor Gordon Paper, 18881-1980." MC150.

"Martha Edgerton Plassmann Papers." MC78.

Oral History Collections

"Alan M. Thompson Public Presentation." OH177.

"Albert J. Clark Interview." OH 412.

"Charles D. McDonald Interview." OH262.

"Eugene Cox Interview." OH934.

"Frank Zogarts Interview." OH411.

"Mary Duncan Colley Interview." OH1812.

"Walter Duncan, Perdita Duncan, Elmo Fortune, William Fenter Interviews." OH483.

Special Collections

"Dutrieuille Family Papers." SC785.

"Edwin W. Knight Letters." SC946.

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

National Record of Historic Places Documentation

Hagen, Delia. "African-American Heritage Places in Helena, MT" NRHP Multiple Properties Documentation Form. September 2016.

"Belt Commercial Historic District" NRHP Registration Form. 24CA826.

"Crump-Howard House" NRHP Registration Form. 24LC2450.

"Dorsey Grocery and Residence" NRHP Registration Form. 24LC2433.

"Haight-Bridgwater House" NRHP Registration Form. 24LC2272.

"Morgan-Case Homestead" NRHP Registration Form. 24GN0195.

"Samuel Lewis House" NRHP Registration Form. 24GA1502.

"Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church" NRHP Registration Form. 24CA0970.

Historic Property Record Forms

"Allsup Family Home" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 241623.

"Armstrong Apartments" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24SB1053.

"Barnes Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24HL1624.

"Conley Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24HL1626.

"Dan Hurt Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24CR1340.

"David and Katie Knott Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24CA1747.

"Dorsey House" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24MO1681.

"Frank and Sarah Q. Walker Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24DL0822.

"John and Armeta Duncan Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24SB0990.

"Lee Pleasant Driver's Saloon and Club Rooms" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24DL0821.

"McDonald House" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24FA1919.

"Mrs. Browning's Furnished Rooms" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24YL2046.

"Oswald and Ada Smith House" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24GA1953.

"Shaffer's Chapel" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24SB0991.

"Taylor-Reed House" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24 CA1748.

"Walter and Alyce Duncan Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24SB1054.

"Wayman Chapel" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24YL2047.

"William and Gertrude Johnson Residence" Montana Historic Property Record Form. 24MO1682.

Newspapers

The Anaconda Standard, Anaconda, MT.

The Billings Gazette, Billings, MT

The Bozeman Avant Courier, Bozeman, MT.

The Bozeman Chronicle, Bozeman, MT.

The Butte Daily Miner, Butte, MT.
The Butte Inter-Mountain, Butte, MT.
The California Eagle, Los Angeles, CA.
The Colored Citizen, Helena, MT.
The Daily Missoulian, Missoula, MT.
The Great Falls Daily Tribune, Great Falls, MT.
The Great Falls Leader, Great Falls, MT.
The Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls, MT.
The Havre Herald, Havre, MT.
The Helena Independent, Helena, MT.
The Kalispell Bee, Kalispell, MT.
The Kansas City Sun, Kansas City, MO.
The Montana Plaindealer, Helena, MT.
The Montana Standard, Butte, MT.
The New Age, Butte, MT.
The Western News, Hamilton, MT.
Powder River County Examiner, Powder River, MT.

Websites

Ancestry.com
 Chronicleingamerica.loc.gov
 Newspapers.com
 Blackpast.org
 Blackamericansmt.blogspot.com
 mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans

Books and Articles

Albright, Robert Edwin. "The American Civil War as a Factor in Montana Territorial Politics." *Pacific Historical Review* 6:1 (March 1937), 36-46.

Allmendinger, Blake. *Imagining the African American West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Anderson, Warwick. *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Bakken, Gordon Morris, and Brenda Farrington. *Racial Encounters in the Multi-Cultural West*. New York: Garland Pub., 2000.

Banner, Stuart. *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

———. *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power of the Frontier*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Barker, Joanne, ed. *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

Basso, Matthew L. *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front*. University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Behan, Barbara Carol. "Forgotten Heritage: African Americans in the Montana Territory, 1864-1889." *The Journal of African American History* 91:1 (2006), 23-40.

Benton-Cohen, Katherine. *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Berardi, Gayle K, and Thomas W Segady. "The Development of African-American Newspapers in the American West: A Sociohistorical Perspective." *The Journal of Negro History* 75, no. 3/4 (1990): 96-111.

Berlin, Ira, ed. *The Black Military Experience*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

———. *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.

Berwanger, Eugene. "Hardin and Langston: Western Black Spokesmen of the Reconstruction Era." *Journal of Negro History* 64:2 (Spring 1979), 101-14.

———. *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967.

———. *The West and Reconstruction*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1981.

———. "Willian J. Hardin: Colorado Spokesman for Racial Justice, 1863-1873." *Colorado Magazine* 52:1 (Winter 1975), 52-65.

Billington, Monroe. *New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866-1900*. Niwot: University of Press of Colorado, 1991.

Billington, Monroe Lee, and Roger D Hardaway. *African Americans on the Western Frontier*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1998.

Brady, Marilyn Dell. "Kansas Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1900-1930." *Kansas History* 9:1 (Spring 1986), 19-30.

Brooks, James F. ed. *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

Broussard, Albert S. *African Americans in the West*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Journal of the West, 2005.

———. *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993.

———. *Expectations of Equality: A History of Black Westerners*. Wheeling, Ill.; Cody, Wyo.: Harlan Davidson, Inc. ; Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2012.

———. "The New Racial Frontier: San Francisco's Black Community: 1900-1940." Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1977.

Buecker, Thomas R. "Confrontation at Sturgis: An Episode in Civil-Military Race Relations, 1885." *South Dakota History* 14:3 (Fall 1984), 238-61.

———. "One Soldier's Service: Caleb Benson in the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry, 1875-1908." *Nebraska History* 74:2 (Summer 1993), 54-62.

Byrd, James W. "Afro-American Writers in the West." In J. Golden Taylor, ed., *A Literary History of the American West*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1987.

Byrd, Jodi. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Carper, James C. "The Popular Ideology of Segregated Schooling: Attitudes toward the Education of the Blacks in Kansas, 1854-1900." *Kansas History* 1:4 (Winter 1978), 254 - 65.

Champion, Laurie, and Bruce Glasrud, eds. *The African American West: A Century of Short Stories*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000.

Chaudhuri, Nupur. "We All Seem Like Brothers and Sisters': The African-American Community in Manhattan, Kansas, 1865-1940." *Kansas History* 14:4 (Winter 1991), 270-88.

Christian, Garna L. *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995.

Colbert, Robert E. "The Attitude of Older Negro Residents toward Recent Negro Migrants in the Pacific Northwest." *Journal of Negro Education* 15:4 (Fall 1946), 695-703.

Coleman, Jon. *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Coleman, Ronald. "Blacks in Utah History: An Unknown Legacy." In Helen Z. Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah*. Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1976.

———. "The Buffalo Soldiers: Guardians of the Uintah Frontier, 1886-1901." *Utah Historical* 47:4 (Fall 1979), 421-39.

———. "A History of Blacks in Utah, 1825-1910." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1980.

Cox, Thomas C. *Blacks in Topeka: A Social History*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982.

Crockett, Norman L. *The Black Towns*. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979.

Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991.

———. ed. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996.

Cross, Gary. "Labor in Settler State Democracies: Comparative Perspectives on Australia and the US, 1860-1920." *Labor History*, 70 (1996), 1-24.

Dann, Martin E. "From Sodom to the Promised Land: E.P. McCabe and the Movement for Oklahoma Colonization," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 40:3 (Autumn 1974), 370-78.

Davenport, Lorelee, and Thos. W. Eva. *A Journey Toward Sovereignty and Security: The AfricanAmerican Community of Butte, Montana from 1885-1955*. Housed at Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives and the Montana Historical Society, publisher not identified, 2001.

de Graaf, Lawrence B. "Race, Sex, and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920." *Pacific Historical Review* 49:1 (February 1980), 285-314.

———. "Recognition, Racism, and Reflections on the Writing of Western Black History." *Pacific Historical Review* 44:1 (February 1975), 22-51.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903.

———. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1935.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston: BeaconPress, 2014.

Eruteya, Glenda Rose Spearman. "Racial Legislation in Montana: 1864–1955." *Master's Thesis*, Political Science Department, University of Montana, Missoula, 1981.

Fiege, Mark. *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012.

Flamming, Douglas. "African Americans in the Twentieth-Century West." Chapter 12 of *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Devereaux. Blackwell Publishing, 2007, 219–39.

Fowler, Arlen L. *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1971.

Franklin, Joseph. *All through the Night: The History of Spokane's Black Americans*. Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1989.

Fujitani, Takashi. *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Garceau-Hagen, Dee, Lynn M. Hudson, Anne M. Butler, Ruthanne Lum McCunn, Linda S. Peavy, Natalie Dykstra, and Laura Woodworth-Ney. *Portraits of Women in the American West*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Gatewood, Willard B. *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*. Bloomington: IndianaUniversity Press, 1990.

Glasrud, Bruce Alan. "Black Texans, 1900-1930: A History." Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1969.

Glasrud, Bruce A, and Charles A Braithwaite. *African Americans on the Great Plains: An Anthology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.

Glasrud, Bruce A., and Michael N. Searles. *Buffalo Soldiers in the West a Black Soldiers Anthology*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007.

Greenbaum, Susan G. *The Afro-American Community in Kansas City, Kansas: A History*. Kansas City, Kan.: City of Kansas City, 1982.

Goldberg, David Theo. *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993.

———. *The Racial State*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002.

Gordon, Linda. *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Gordon, Taylor. *Born to Be*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Gregory, James N. "The Southern Diaspora: How The Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2005.

Grinde, Donald, and Quintard Taylor. "Red vs. Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907." *American Indian Quarterly* 8:3 (Summer 1984), 211-29.

Guenther, Todd. "At Home on the Range: Black Settlement in Rural Wyoming, 1850-1950." M.A. thesis, University of Wyoming, 1988.

Hansen, Moya. "Entitled to Full and Equal Enjoyment: Leisure and Entertainment in the Denver Black Community, 1900 to 1930." *University of Colorado at Denver Historical Studies Journal* 10:1 (Spring 1993), 57-71.

Hardaway, Roger D. *A Narrative Bibliography of the African-American Frontier: Blacks in the Rocky Mountain West, 1535-1912*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.

Harlan, Louis R. *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Harris, Cole. *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002.

Harris, Theodore, ed. *Negro Frontiersman: The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, First Negro Graduate of West Point*. El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1963.

Hyde, Anne F. *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

Jacobs, Margaret D. *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.

Johnson, Jeffrey Alan. "Border Patrols, Buffalo Soldiers, and Boredom: Fort Assinniboine, Montana, 1879-1911." M.A. thesis, Washington State University, 2000.

Johnson, Michael K. "Essay Review- 'The Like of Which Is Found Nowhere Else in All the World': Placing and Imagining an African American West." *Western American Literature*. 41:3 (2006), 336-44.

- Johnson, Michael K. *Hoo-Doo Cowboys and Bronze Buckaroos: Conceptions of the AfricanAmerican West*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014.
- Ketterer, Merri Folley. *Steroscopic Race and Gender in Virginia City, Montana: The Life of Sarah Blair Gammon Brown Bickford*. Bozeman, Mont.: Montana State University, 2006.
- Klassen, Teresa C., and Owen V. Johnson. "Sharpening of the *Blade*: Black Consciousness in Kansas, 1892-97." *Journalism Quarterly* 63:2 (Summer 1986), 298-304.
- Klein, Kerwin Lee. *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Knoblock, Frieda. *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Koelle, Alexandra V. "Pedaling on the Periphery: The African American Twenty-Fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps and the Roads of American Expansion." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 41:3 (2010), 305-26.
- Kremer, Gary R. *James Milton Turn and the Promise of America: The Public Life of a Post-Civil War Black Leader*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991.
- Lane, Ann J. *The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971.
- Lang, William. "The Nearly Forgotten Blacks on Last Chance Gulch, 1900-1912." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 70:2 (April 1979), 50-51.
- . "Tempest on Lore Street: Race and Politics in Helena, Montana, 1906." *Scratchgravel Hills* 3 (Summer 1980), 9-14.
- Larsen, Lawrence H. *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier*. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978.
- Laurie, Clayton D. "The United States Army and the Labor Radical of the Coeur d'Alenes: Federal Military Intervention in the Mining Wars of 1892-1899." *Idaho Yesterdays* 37:2 (Summer 1993), 12-29.
- Leroy, Justin. "Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism." *Theory and Event* 19:4 (2016).
- Lewis, David Levering. *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1987.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson, Andrew Cowell, and Sharon K. Collinge, eds. *Remedies for a New West: Healing Landscapes, Histories, and Cultures*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.

Litwack, Leon. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

———. *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 179-1860*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

———. *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Liwick, Leon, and August Meirer, eds. *Black Leaders of the 19th Century*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.

Loewen, James. *Sundown Towns : A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: New Press, 2005.

Lyles, Lionel Dean. "An Historical-Urban Geographical Analysis of Black Neighborhood Development in Denver, 1860-1970." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1977.

Mack, Dwayne. "May the Work I've Done Speak for Me: African American CCC Enrollees in MT, 1933-34," *Western Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 27:4 (Winter 2003), 236-245.

Madley, Benjamin. *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.

Malone, Michael P. "Beyond the Last Frontier: Towards a New Approach to Western American History." *Western Historical Quarterly* 20:4 (November 1989), 409-27.

Malone, Michael P., Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang. *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991.

Mar, Tracey Banivanua, and Penelope Edmonds, eds. *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Marx, Anthony W. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, The United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

McGowen, Tom. *African-Americans in the Old West*. New York: Children's Press, 1998.

McLagan, Elizabeth. *A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940*. Portland, Ore.: Georgian Press, 1980.

McMillen, Christian. "Border State Terror and the Genesis of the African American Community in Deer Lodge and Chouteau Counties, Montana, 1870-1890." *Journal of Negro History* 79:2 (Spring 1994), 212-14.

Mercier, Laurie. *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

———. "Reworking Race, Class, and Gender into Pacific Northwest History." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22:3 (2001), 61–74.

Miles, Tiya. *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

———. "The Long Arm of the South?" *The Western Historical Quarterly* 43 (Autumn, 2012), 274-281.

Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Mukenge, Ida Rousseau. *The Black Church in Urban America: A Case Study in Political Economy*. Lanham, Md.: University of California, Berkeley, 1989.

Murphy, Mary. *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-1941*. Urbana: Chicago University Press, 1997.

Myers, Rex C. "Montana's Negro Newspapers, 1894-1911." *Montana Journalism Review* 16 (Fall 1973).

Norris, Melvin Edward, Jr., "Dearfield, Colorado—The Evolution of the a Rural Black Settlement: A Historical Geography of Black Colonization on the Great Plains." Ph.D. dissertation University of Colorado, Boulder, 1980.

O'Brien, Claire, "'With One Mighty Pull': Interracial Town Boosting in Nicodemus, Kansas." *Great Plains Quarterly* 61:2 (Spring 1996), 117-30.

Oliver, Mamie O. *Idaho Ebony: The Afro-American Presence in Idaho State History*. Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1990.

Organ, David Joseph. "The Historical Geography of African American Frontier Settlement." Ph.D., dissertation University of California, Berkeley, 1995.

Ostler, Jeffery. *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*. Topeka: University Press of Kansas, 1986.

———. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1987.

———. *The History of White People*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

Pascoe, Peggy. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Pfaelzer, Jean. *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans*. New York: Random House, 2007.

Pierce, Jason E. *Making the White Man's West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016.

Reeve, W. Paul. *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Richard, K. Keith. "Unwelcome Settlers: Black and Mulatto Oregon Pioneers," Part 1. *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 84:1 (Spring 1983), 35-36.

Rico, Monica. *Nature's Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Riley, Glenda. "American Daughters: Black Women in the West." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 38:2 (Spring 1988), 14-27.

Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso, 1991.

Rydall, E. H. "California for Colored Folk." *Colored American Magazine* 12:5 (May 1907), 386-388.

Schubert, Frank, ed. *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1995.

Smurr J. W. "Jim Crow out West." In J.W. Smurr and K. Ross Toole, eds., *Historical Essays on Montana and the Northwest: In Honor of Paul C. Phillips*. Helena: Western Press, Historical Society of Montana, 1957.

Smythe, Donald, S.J. "John J. Pershing at Fort Assiniboine." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 18:1 (Winter 1968), 19-23.

Spiro, Jonathan Peter. *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant*. Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009.

Stegner, Wallace. *Wolf Willow*. New York: The Viking Press, 1962.

Steward, T. G., *The Colored Regulars in the United States Army*. Philadelphia: A.M.E. Book Concern, 1904.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

———. ed. *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

———. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

Sturdevant, Anne Marie. "White Hoods Under the Big Sky: Montanans Embrace the Ku Klux Klan, 1920s." *In Speaking Ill of the Dead: Jerks in Montana History, Second.*, 311–27. Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 2011.

Swartout, Robert R. *Montana: A Cultural Medley*. Helena, Mont.: Farcountry Press, 2015.

Taylor, Quintard. "Black Urban Development—Another View: Seattle's Central District, 1910- 1940." *Pacific Historical Review* 58:4 (November 1989), 429-48.

———. *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the America West, 1528-1990*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1998.

———. "The Emergence of the Afro-American Communities in the Pacific Northwest 1865-1910." *Journal of Negro History* 64:4 (Fall 1979), 342-51.

———. "The Forging of a Black Community: *Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

———. "From Esteban to Rodney King: Five Centuries of African American History in the West." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 46:4 (Winter 1996), 2-23.

———. "The Great Migration: The Afro-American Communities of Seattle and Portland during the 1940s." *Arizona and the West* 23:2 (Summer 1981), 109-26.

———. "Slaves and Free Men: Blacks in the Oregon Country, 1840-1860." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 83:2 (Summer 1982), 165-69.

Taylor, Quintard, and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. *African American Women Confront the West: 1600-2000*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.

Tyrrell, Ian. *Crisis of a Wasteful Nation: Empire and Conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Warren, Louis. *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Washington, Booker T. *The Future of the American Negro*. New York: Haskell House, 1899.

———. *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*. New York: Doubleday, 1901.

Washington, Margaret. "African American History and the Frontier Thesis."

Journal of the Early Republic 13:2 (Summer 1993), 230-241.

Wayne, George H. "Negro Migration and Colonization in Colorado." *Journal of the West* 15:1 (January 1976), 102-20.

Weisiger, Marsha. *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Weiss, Nancy J. *The National Urban League, 1910-1940*. New: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Wesley, Charles H. *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc.: A Legacy of Service*. Washington: Associated Publishers, 1984.

West, Elliot. *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

Willis, Deborah. ed. *J.P. Ball, Daguerrean and Studio Photographer*. New York: Garland Pub., 1993.

White, Richard. "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own.:" *A New History of the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

———. "Race Relations in the American West." *American Quarterly* 38:3 (1986), 394-416.

Wolf, Patrick. "Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* Vol. 3, Iss. 3-04 (2013), 257-279.

———. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (December 2006), 387-409.

———. *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*. London: Verso, 2016.

Wood, Anthony. "After the West Was Won: How African American Buffalo Soldiers Invigorated the Helena Community in Early Twentieth-Century Montana." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 66:3 (Autumn 2016) 36-50.

Wood, Peter H. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1974.

Wray, Matt. *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

POPULATION AND CENSUS TABLES

Table 1.1³⁰²

African American Population for Urban Centers in Montana 1910

City	African American Population	Total Population	Percentage
Anaconda	128	10134	1.26%
Billings	147	10031	1.47%
Bozeman	33	5107	0.60%
Butte	264	39165	0.67%
Great Falls	118	13948	0.84%
Havre	31	3624	0.85%
Helena	425	12515	3.40%
Lewiston	53	N/A	N/A
Livingston	16	N/A	N/A
Miles City	60	N/A	N/A
Missoula	136	12869	1.00%

Table 1.2

African American Population for Urban Centers in Montana 1930

City	African American Population	Total Population	Percentage
Anaconda	106	12494	0.84%
Billings	142	16380	0.86%
Bozeman	21	6855	0.30%
Butte	170	39532	0.43%
Great Falls	208	28822	0.72%
Havre	37	6372	0.58%
Helena	133	11803	1.10%
Lewiston	15	N/A	N/A
Livingston	0	N/A	N/A
Miles City	35	N/A	N/A
Missoula	116	14657	0.79%

³⁰² 1910-1930 census records, populations, and ethnic demographics see, Montana - Race and Hispanic Origin: 1870 to 1990: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available online at http://mhs.mt.gov/Portals/11/shpo/AfricanAmerican/CensusData/MontanaRace_HispanicOrigin1870_1990.pdf; Individual city data 1910, 1930: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

Table 1.3

African American Population of Montana by Gender 1910

City	Female Residents	Male Residents
Anaconda	53	73
Billings	67	79
Bozeman	16	14
Butte	109	154
Great Falls	58	59
Helena	176	237
Missoula	66	71

Table 1.4

African American Population of Montana by Gender 1930

City	Female Residents	Male Residents
Anaconda	46	59
Billings	67	74
Bozeman	10	11
Butte	78	91
Great Falls	96	112
Helena	67	67
Missoula	56	60

Table 2.1³⁰³

African American Home Ownership by City 1910

City	Number of African American Owned Homes	Number of Residents in Owned Households	Percentage*
Anaconda	1	2	1%
Billings	19	45	31%
Bozeman	6	22	65%
Butte	17	54	21%
Great Falls	19	50	42%
Helena	28	87	21%
Missoula	10	36	26%

*Home ownership calculated by dividing the number of black-owned household residents by the total number of residents in each city.

³⁰³ 1910-1930 Individual city data including residence and home ownership for 1910, 1930: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

Table 3.1³⁰⁴

Interracial Marriages recorded in 1910 census

City	Names
Anaconda	George (black) and Elizabeth (white) Ellis Joseph A. (white) and Lillie (black) Roy William (black) and Betty (white) Simmons
Billings	Wafford (white) and Susan (black) Dakan Chas (Chinese) and Gertrude (black) Tong William (white) and Ester (black) McIntire
Butte	Cornelius P. (white) and Anna (black) Coughlin Harry W. (black) and Hannah J. (white) Johnson
Missoula	Jordan (black) and Mary (white) Binga Edward (black) and Etta (white) Haynes Edward (black) and Mary (white) Mack Frank (black) and Alice (white) Benson Solomon (black) and Sarah (white) Dorsey Kallilis (black) and Teresa (white) Johnson John (black) and Annie (white) Williams
Miles City	Levi (black) and Mary (white) Simpson V.B. (white) and Sadie (black) Thomas
Livingston	William (white) and Willie (black) Donahue

³⁰⁴ 1910-1930 Individual city data on marriage status derived from census enumerations: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

Table 3.2³⁰⁵

Interracial Marriages recorded in 1930 census

City	Names
Butte	John Rasmussen (white) and Jessie (black)
Cole	Albert (white) and Ann Lee (black) Marshall Richard E. (white) and Zoila (black) Randall
Great Falls	Chris (white) and Christine (black) Peterson Cassius (white) and Cecile (black) Tucker
Helena	James H. (black) and Mary (white) Howard Joseph P. (white) and Pearl (black) Lacey
Havre	Sam (white) and Ida (black) Ross

³⁰⁵ 1910-1930 Individual city data on marriage status derived from census enumerations: Research of the Montana Historical Society, available at <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/ResourcesResearch>.

APPENDIX B:

HOMESTEAD RESEARCH

Table 1

Montana Homesteader Displacement Data following 1917.

The following data set was compiled by the author using the following methodology: GLO Homestead patents, listed at <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=566771&docClass=SER&sid=py1ptgm4.glg> were compiled into a dataset of awarded homestead patents in the early months of 1917. Patent holders were taken from the list alphabetically by last name, offering a diversity of homesteads across Montana with no preference or distinction by county. All 287 patents were analyzed. The owners of the homesteads awarded in 1917 were traced via 1920 and 1930 censuses, relevant Polk City Directories, and historic newspapers accessed on chroniclingamerica.loc.gov and ancestry.com. Data was compiled based on the following resulting criteria: The county or city of residence (in Montana) listed for 1920, 1930, or any available Polk City Directories in years following, as well as the listed profession of the individual listed on the Patent.

The information table below notes the percentage of individuals who remained on the homestead through the next census year, the percentage of individuals who appear in new locations, and their new occupations (if listed), and the percentage of individuals who no longer appear in Montana's residential records or archive after 1917.

N.B. Each individual patent holder or homesteader potentially represents more than one individual i.e. families/cohabs

Total Individuals Surveyed	110
Total Patents Surveyed	287
Individuals Remaining on Homestead after 1920	37
Individuals Living Elsewhere in Montana after 1920	28
Individuals No Longer Living in Montana after 1920	45
Total Individuals Living Elsewhere	73
Total percentage of Homesteaders that removed from Montana after 1920	66.3%
Total percentage of Individuals who left homesteads who moved residences within Montana	38.4%