Eighteen political cartoons examining the racial issues confronting black and white Americans in the 1920s—the “race problem”—appear on the following pages. They were published in general circulation (white-owned) and African American newspapers from 1919 to 1928. [Virulent racist depictions from the period are not included in this collection.]

To analyze a political cartoon, consider its:

- **CONTENT.** First, basically describe what is drawn in the cartoon (without referring to the labels). What is depicted? What is happening?

- **CONTEXT.** Consider the timing. What is happening in national events at the time of the cartoon? Check the date: what occurred in the days and weeks before the cartoon appeared?

- **LABELS.** Read each label; look for labels that are not apparent at first, and for other written content in the cartoon.

- **SYMBOLS.** Name the symbols in the cartoons. What do they mean? How do they convey the cartoon’s meaning?

- **TITLE.** Study the title. Is it a statement, question, exclamation? Does it employ a well-known phrase, e.g., slang, song lyric, movie title, radio show, political or product slogan? How does it encapsulate and enhance the cartoonist’s point?

- **TONÉ.** Identify the tone of the cartoon. Is it satirical, comic, tragic, ironic, condemning, quizzical, imploring? What adjective describes the feeling of the cartoon? How do the visual elements in the drawing align with its tone?

- **POINT.** Put it all together. What is the cartoonist’s point?

**QUESTIONS**

- How did general circulation and African American newspapers differ in interpreting the “race problem”?

- How did each view the role of citizens, states, and the federal government in addressing the “race problem”?

- Which cartoon would you select as the most successful in delivering its point? Why?
“The Missionary’s Sons”

*Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1919

Cartoonist: John T. McCutcheon

East St. Louis race riots: May/July 1917  Boston police strike: Sept. 1919
Chicago race riots: July/August 1919  Omaha lawlessness: Sept. 1919

The three figures on the European continent are caricatures of a Russian, a Greek, and a Spaniard, probably referring to the Russian Revolution and civil war, the Greco-Turkish War, and the 1919 Barcelona workers’ general strike.

Reproduced by permission of the Chicago Tribune. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“They’re Learning”

New York World, September 30, 1919
Cartoonist: Rollin Kirby

Lenine: Vladimir Lenin, Bolshevik leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.
Omaha, Nebraska, race riot, Sept. 28-29, 1919.

Permission pending identification of copyright holder. Digital image from microfilm.
“At the Other End of the Lyncher’s Rope”

Des Moines Register, Iowa, September 30, 1919
Cartoonist: Jay N. “Ding” Darling.

While the sketch quality of the image suggests the cartoon was not published, it did appear on the front page of the Sept. 30, 1919, edition of the Des Moines Register.

Reproduced by permission of the Jay N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. Digital image courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries.
“They Have Ears but They Hear Not”
[Psalm 135:17]

The Crisis, November 1920
African American periodical. Cartoonist: Albert Alex Smith.

Reproduced by permission of the Modernist Journals Project, Brown University and the University of Tulsa.
Untitled

*The Afro-American*, Baltimore, November 11, 1921

African American newspaper. Cartoonist: John Good [—].

Despite widespread support for a “soldier’s bonus” for World War I veterans, Congress delayed legislation until 1924.

Reproduced by permission of The Afro-American Newspapers Archives & Research Center. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
"If the Daily Press Dared Tell the Truth"

The Chicago Defender, July 1, 1922

African American newspaper
“Cast Overboard”

The Afro-American, Baltimore, Dec. 15, 1922

Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill: Republican bill introduced in the U.S. Congress in 1918 to make lynching a federal crime; passed in the House in 1922; blocked in the Senate by southern Democrats, after which the Senate Republican caucus vote, on December 2, to abandon the bill in that session of Congress.
"Their Christmas Tree"

*Judge*, Dec. 16, 1922
as reprinted in *The Afro-American*, Baltimore, Dec. 29, 1922
“Great Scot! What Have I Done?”

_The Chicago Defender, February 17, 1923_

Permission request in process. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“The South Will Soon Be Demanding Restriction of Migration of Its Labor”

Chicago Daily Tribune, May 10, 1923
Cartoonist: John T. McCutcheon

Reproduced by permission of the Chicago Tribune. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
"He Tries to Please Everybody"

The Afro-American, Baltimore, Dec. 21, 1923
“The U.S. Constitution Will Soon Be Bobtailed”

_The Afro-American_, Baltimore, January 18, 1924


14th Amendment, ratified 1868: citizenship granted to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. (thereby granting citizenship to all African Americans); states required to provide due process of law and “equal protection of the laws” for all U.S. citizens.

18th Amendment, ratified 1919: banned the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors in the U.S. (Prohibition), repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933.
“Too Powerful to Keep Out!”

The Chicago Defender, September 13, 1924


Gompers: president of the American Federation of Labor from its founding in 1886 to his death in December 1924.
“Smashing an Old Idol!”

The Chicago Defender, April 25, 1925


Antebellum: before the end of the Civil War in 1865 [Latin: “before war”].

“Black mammy”: racial stereotype of the passive, cheerful enslaved woman who cared for the slaveholder’s children.
“State’s Rights or State’s Wrongs?”

The Afro-American, Baltimore, Feb. 20, 1926

South Carolina: Benjamin Tillman, state governor (1890-1894) and U.S. Senator (1895-1918); known for his virulent support of white supremacy and states’ rights positions.

Maryland: Albert C. Ritchie, state governor (1920-1925): states’ rights advocate and fervent anti-Prohibition spokesman.


Volsteadism: Support of Prohibition (enforced through the 1920 Volstead Act).

Reproduced by permission of The Afro-American Newspapers Archives & Research Center. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“The Chain Is No Stronger than Its Weakest Link”

*The New Journal and Guide*, Norfolk, Virginia, July 24, 1926


14th Amendment, ratified 1868: citizenship granted to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. (thereby granting citizenship to all African Americans); states required to provide due process of law and “equal protection of the laws” for all U.S. citizens.

18th Amendment, ratified 1919: banned the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors in the U.S. (Prohibition); repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933.

Permission request in process. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
“Seeing Yourself as Others See You”

The Pittsburgh Courier, March 26, 1927

“The Long Hard Trail”

_The Afro-American_, Baltimore, August 25, 1928


Oscar Stanton De Priest was the first African American elected to Congress in the twentieth century, serving as the representative of a Chicago district for three terms, from 1929 to 1935.

Reproduced by permission of The Afro-American Newspapers Archives & Research Center. Digital image courtesy of ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
Heading to the depot through the dust hollows and the cotton fields
they were hoping to catch. "and the last one"

Land be the first one in the car," Miss Thecnie had whispered down the train
second-born daughter of the proud land of the ancestors. "May the
youngest son of the Mississippi soil. Miss Thecenie had not wanted them
wear out their shirts the Mississippi soil. Miss Thecenie had seen our clothes they had
Miss Thecenie had seen our clothes worn and the hems of the dresses they had
cook pots and kerosene lamps, a bible and the quilts that Ida Mae and

IDA MAE BROWN GLADNEY
NEAR OXLONA, MISSISSIPPI, LATE AUTUMN 1937

Of Their Coming
The Appointed Time
Excerpt from a letter:

Sirs:

You may have the feeling that we are the only ones on this earth who have any chance to stop the war. If so, you are not alone. The war is not over yet. We have been fighting for a long time and we are fighting for the very survival of our way of life. We are fighting for the future of our children and our grandchildren.

Your support is crucial to our success. Without your help, we cannot continue to fight this war. Please consider making a donation today. Every dollar counts.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Robert Joseph Pershing Foster

Monroe, Louisiana. The Monday After Easter 1993
Looking through the train window, I saw the Mississippi. The train slowed down as we passed through the rural countryside, and I watched the fields and farms go by. It was a peaceful ride, and I enjoyed the scenery.

On the train, I met a woman named Alice. She was traveling to California for the first time and was excited about the adventure. We chatted for a while, and she told me about her family and their life back home. It was interesting to hear her stories and listen to her perspective on life.

As the train continued on its journey, I observed the diversity of people on board. There were families, couples, and individuals, each with their own stories and reasons for traveling. It was a reminder of the beauty of diversity and the importance of understanding each other.

We arrived in San Francisco late at night, and I couldn't wait to explore the city. I had heard so much about it and was eager to see it for myself. Alice offered to show me around, and we spent the next few days exploring the city, trying delicious food, and visiting museums.

Overall, the train journey to California was a memorable experience. It allowed me to appreciate the beauty of nature and the richness of human life.
The Great Mississippi River flows through the center of the country, pouring its floodwaters into the heart of America. The city of New Orleans, with its French Quarter, the French Market, and the mighty Mississippi River, is one of the most beautiful and historic cities in the country. The riverfront is lined with restaurants, bars, and shops, offering a glimpse into the city's rich history and culture.

The Chicago Central is the main railroad station in Chicago, serving as a hub for passengers and cargo. The station is located in the heart of the city, providing easy access to transportation and entertainment. The Chicago Central has been a symbol of progress and innovation, reflecting the city's role as a center of commerce and industry.

The transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, connected the East Coast to the West Coast, providing a direct link between the two coasts. The railroad was a symbol of progress and expansion, allowing people and goods to travel faster and more efficiently than ever before. The completion of the transcontinental railroad had a profound impact on the country, shaping the economy and society in ways that are still felt today.

The Chicago Central is a testament to the spirit of ingenuity and innovation that has characterized the American West for generations. It stands as a reminder of the role that transportation has played in shaping the course of American history, and it continues to be a vital part of the country's economic and cultural landscape.

Exodus

The city of Chicago is one of the most dynamic and exciting cities in the country. It is a city of contrasts, with its world-class museums, historic landmarks, and cutting-edge technology. Chicago is home to many of the nation's top universities and corporations, making it a hub of innovation and growth.

The city's skyline is a testament to its rich history and cultural heritage. The Willis Tower, also known as the Sears Tower, stands as a symbol of the city's resilience and determination. The Magnificent Mile, a shopping district filled with designer stores and restaurants, is a popular destination for tourists and locals alike.

Despite its size and complexity, Chicago remains a city of warmth and hospitality. It is a place where people come together to celebrate their differences and share their dreams. The city's vibrant arts scene, including museums, theaters, and galleries, offers a wealth of cultural experiences for visitors and residents alike.

Chicago is a city of contrasts, where tradition and innovation coexist side by side. It is a city that has faced its share of challenges, but has always bounced back stronger and more resilient. The city's rich history and dynamic present make it a place that is truly one of a kind.
Robert Joseph Perking Foster
EAST TEXAS, APRIL 14, 1945

George Swanson Standlee
On the Shiver Meteor, April 14, 1945

This way only!

The land was changed now. He was passed over into Texas, the county of which he was a citizen in the April, 1945. He was now in the county of which he was a citizen. He was now in the county of which he was a citizen.
The next morning, you having been awake to check into a hotel, you

breakfast with the friends you had made the night before. You decide to
goodbye and say, "Have a nice day." The friends wave goodbye and say,

"Have a nice day!" You leave the hotel, looking forward to exploring the
city and enjoying your time there.

The hotel's location is quite convenient, as it is just a short walk from
the main attractions. You decide to take a walk around the city and
enjoy the sights and sounds of the area.

As you walk, you notice a group of people gathered outside a small
restaurant. You decide to join them and enjoy a meal at the restaurant.

After the meal, you decide to take a stroll through the city's historic
districts, admiring the architecture and learning about the history of
the area.

Towards the end of the day, you return to the hotel and

get ready for dinner at the restaurant. You enjoy a delicious meal
with the friends you had made earlier in the day.

After dinner, you decide to take a walk around the city, admiring the
lights and sounds of the area.

As you walk, you notice a group of people gathered outside a small
building. You decide to join them and enjoy a drink at the building.

After the drink, you decide to take a stroll through the city's historic
districts, admiring the architecture and learning about the history of
the area.

Towards the end of the day, you return to the hotel and

get ready for bed. You fall asleep thinking about all the
events of the day and looking forward to the next day.

The next morning, you wake up early and decide to start the day
by exploring the city's historical sites. You visit a few historical sites
and learn about the history of the area.

Towards the end of the day, you return to the hotel and

get ready for dinner at the restaurant. You enjoy a delicious meal
with the friends you had made earlier in the day.

After dinner, you decide to take a stroll through the city, admiring the
lights and sounds of the area.

As you walk, you notice a group of people gathered outside a small
building. You decide to join them and enjoy a drink at the building.

After the drink, you decide to take a stroll through the city's historic
districts, admiring the architecture and learning about the history of
the area.

Towards the end of the day, you return to the hotel and

get ready for bed. You fall asleep thinking about all the
events of the day and looking forward to the next day.
Robert was not a particularly religious man, but he was a decent human being, who lived a life of honor and integrity. He never sought to hurt anyone, nor did he enjoy the pain of others. His presence in this world was a testament to the goodness that exists within the human heart.

The old friend looked at him with a mixture of affection and concern. "You've been through a lot, old friend. But you're still here, aren't you?"

"Yes," the other man replied. "I've been through a lot, but I've always come back. I won't let anything break me."


The old friend smiled back. "And always remember, my friend, that we're never alone. We have each other."

Robert reached out and placed his hand on the old friend's shoulder. "I know that, old friend. I know that."

And with those words, the old friend knew that he had found his purpose in life—to support his friend and to serve as a reminder of the strength and resilience that exists within each of us.
It was a spectacle played out in one way or the other on every train.

A little bit of earth, a few huge meadows, and more before the end of it. The colored people knew to get their things and when the train would stop. The colored people knew to move to the other side of the train. They knew the secret of colored characters. They knew when to move from the segregated cars to the other cars moving in their place from the unsegregated cars in the train cars.

The train cars knew the other cars for colored people as well as the other cars. They knew better to get on the secret side of the train.

Heading back to California, the south suddenly began in El Paso.

Richard G. Bowser

George Swanston Starling

Someplace in the Carthagean, April 15, 1975

ON THE SIEVER METER.

Robert Joseph Pershing Foster

Somewhere east of El Paso, April 15, 1975

Someplace in the Carthagean, April 15, 1975

The Warming of Other Lives
How a colored man, or a white man either, for that matter, can be -

“You ain't got up, haven't you?" he said as he and the boy were prepped.

be given to keep their heads down. He told them to expect to be

The grandmother needed them to

be quiet. "Tell them what’s in the air right now. Tell them you heard the

agent in the air. A sort of secret "air." Your agent told you to be quiet, he said.

Then he needed them to throw away the dream. That’s what the

agent in the air said. He needed them to throw away the dream. "You need to hear what's

right now. Tell them what’s in the air. A sort of secret "air." Your agent told you to be quiet, they said.

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agent in the air said. He needed them to throw away the dream. "You need to hear what's

right now. Tell them what’s in the air. A sort of secret "air." Your agent told you to be quiet, they said.
like most colored people making the journey, Robert could not pass for white. Where and when not in a position to do so, he was into a room, which


\[ \text{the road is a path of the same style, this}\]

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The next big city was Phoenix, and he drove in anticipation of it. As he turned south he was in a mood to move. The mountains were now close against the distance. He stopped to look at the huge, red rocks and the sheer cliffs. He was on the verge of making a decision. The mountains were like a giant fence, separating him from the desert. He could see the border with California in the distance. He continued on his way to California. He was still in Arizona. He was looking towards the border. He was looking forward to the next stop. He was looking forward to the next day. He was looking forward to the next week. He was looking forward to the next month. He was looking forward to the next year. He was looking forward to the next decade. He was looking forward to the next century. He was looking forward to the next millennium.

ROBERT JOSEPH PERSHING FOSTER
WESTERN NEW MEXICO, APRIL 1930
Oral History: Rubie Bond, the African-American Experience in Wisconsin

A version of this lesson plan was developed by the Office of School Services as part of the Wisconsin Stories online activity guide for the secondary-level classroom. Please adapt it to fit your students’ needs.

Background Information

The following oral history transcript is an excerpt of an interview with Rubie Bond, a resident of Beloit featured in Wisconsin Public Television's Finding a Home program. The interview from which this transcript was prepared was conducted in 1976, part of the Beloit Bicentennial Oral History Project. The project aimed to document the migration of African Americans to Beloit from the South, mostly between the late 1910s and the 1950s. The interviews contain information on employment, labor problems, education, housing segregation, the Beloit NAACP, churches, the Women's Community Club, and many other topics. The oral history tapes are preserved in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's Archives, at Beloit College, and at the Beloit Public Library. Abstracts for each interview are available, although full-text transcripts have not been prepared.

In 1917, when she was ten years old, Rubie White moved to Beloit with her parents from Pontotoc, Mississippi. Her father had been recruited to work at Fairbanks, Morse & Co., a heavy manufacturing firm and Beloit's largest employer. She married Franklin Bond in 1928. In this excerpt, Bond describes the circumstances involved in her parents decision to move to Wisconsin, the trip by train to Beloit, the role of churches in the African-American community, and her adjustment to Beloit.

Studied carefully, the oral history transcript provides a good example of how an oral historian probes for information, especially the kind of information that is rarely recorded in documentary sources. The interview with Rubie Bond also provides a good opportunity for students to compare and contrast the African-American experience with that of other ethnic groups who found homes in Wisconsin.

A set of reading and discussion questions follow the transcript of the oral history interview.

Document


Interview with Rubie Bond

I'm wondering why your family decided to leave Mississippi. How was that decision made and why was it made?

Well, the North offered better opportunities for blacks. John McCord, who was a distant cousin, came and explained about conditions, here and so my father and mother decided to come.

What did John McCord tell them?

Only of working conditions and the education for children, for young people, was better than what we had in Pontotoc. Those things I remember.

Fairbanks Morse had sent him down, is that right?

Yes. His parents lived right across the road. We had a highway that divided the farm that we lived on and where they lived. Of course, we've known him and, as I say, his father was a cousin of my
mother’s.

_I’ve heard that recruiters were often in danger in Mississippi if they came down to get workers for northern companies. Do you recall him ever expressing any fear about this job that he was doing?_

Yes. I know that many of the blacks would leave the farms at night and walk for miles. Many of them caught the train to come North, come to Beloit at a little place called Ecru, Mississippi. Usually they would leave with just the clothes on their backs. Maybe the day before they would be in the field working and the plantation owner wouldn’t even know that they planned to go and the next day he would go and the little shanty would be empty. These people would have taken off and come up here.

_Was there a fear that the plantation owner wouldn’t let them go or that they couldn’t leave?_

That’s very true. They wouldn’t. Plantation owners had much to lose. These people were illiterate and they had to depend on the plantation owner. He would give them so much flour for use during the year, cornmeal or sugar or that sort of thing and then at the end of the year you would go to settle up with him and you would always be deeply in debt to him. That was his way of keeping people. You never got out of debt with him. And that’s the way it was with my dad and this fellow, Mr. Stiggel.

_So, many of the people who left were legally in debt and could have been forced to stay in Mississippi? Did you know of any instances where that happened?_

No, because they would leave at night. They would leave when the plantation owner wasn’t around. Of course, they needed these workers to work the cotton fields, that sort of thing. But many of them left under those circumstances.

_What about this decision being made in your family? How was the decision arrived at and over what time span, and was there a lot of talk in the family about “Should we go north?” and that sort of thing, or was it a cut-and-dried decision? Who helped to make it? Do you have any recollections about that?_

Well, that’s almost sixty years ago, and I’m sure my mother and dad discussed it fully, but so many of their friends and relatives had come North. And this Mr. Wetherall, he hated to lose my dad, but on the other hand, he felt that if he could better himself by coming, why, go. You’re entitled to it. He was that type of person. I can remember him coming over to tell us goodbye the day we left.

_You seem to have had quite a different situation then from many of those who left in terms of the attitude that your boss took toward you._

Yes, yes, the last place where my dad lived, [the owner] was very different.

_But I mean, even specifically in relation to this matter of leaving, he didn’t seem to offer resistance like many of the owners did._

No. No threats or anything like that. No.

_Were there others who had that experience? I wonder whether others left easily too, like your father apparently did--or relatively easily._

There might have been some. I can remember my father telling me about one family that came to Beloit, the Grady’s. Mr. Grady had already come to Beloit. He worked and saved money to send back for his family. The postmaster, I guess, wasn’t going to let him have his money, wasn’t going to let his family have it, and somebody that Mrs. Grady knew, some white person, she went to see them and they went over and advised this man that he was breaking the law. He should let her have this money to come to her husband. Things like that.

_Was it more typical for--_

To show resistance? Yes. Yes.

_You seem to be quite clear on the point that your mother would have participated in this decision._
Is that right?
Well, mother and dad, they usually discussed decisions that were to be made.

I'm wondering about the role of women. What do you remember being the role of women in making this decision and carrying on the move?

Well, I think that probably blacks in this country would have died out if it hadn't been for the part that women played because men were, well, the attitude of many toward black men was that they were lower or worse than animals. And, it was a role that mothers played in keeping them alive and then providing them food and that sort of thing for their families because black men have had a hard time coming along.

Would you say that was particularly true in Mississippi?

I think all over the South. All over the South. Yes.

I never thought of this before, but perhaps the move up North was almost more important to the man, was almost a form of liberation for the man more than for the woman. What do you recall along those lines? I know this is a very difficult thing to reach back sixty years for, but if you have any recollections along those lines.

Not too much. I do know that many men came North and got employment and would save and send back for their families. Other than that I don't think I'm qualified to [say].

Now, as a young girl, did you agree with this decision to move North? Did you think it was a good idea?

Yes. I think I did. Because even as a child I think I was pretty sensitive to a lot of the inequalities that existed between blacks and whites, and I know that after we came here my mother and dad used to tell me that if I went back to Mississippi, they would hang me to the first tree.

Did you regret leaving friends, for example, or anything like that?

No, most of my friends had come North. I did have one friend that remained in Mississippi, and she was able to go on and get an education, and she taught.

You know a move like that is really quite an adventure for a young person. You were how old?

I was ten years old. That's all.

How did the move seem to you? How did you feel about it?

Well, I don't know. I guess I've always been one to sort of go off on the deep end, so I think it was an adventure for me. You see something different. I remember very well when the train crossed the Mississippi, I think in Memphis, Tennessee, all of this water on each side of the track. All you could do is think of "what if this train would fall in?" and I also remember seeing the soldiers. This was the beginning of World War I. And they were guarding the bridges and that sort of thing to prevent sabotage.

What year was this?
1917.

What role did the church play in your early life in Mississippi?

Well, I think the church played a very important part in the life of all blacks in Mississippi because it was religious center as well as social. That was one place that they could go and meet and discuss their problems. Relax. So just the--their big picnics and big church meetings they used to have.

I might tell about the type of house we lived in. We lived in a little three-room house. There were two big rooms with fireplace in between . . . . the--fireplace on each side of the partition, and one was where we lived and the other my mother kept for company, and I remember the embroidered bedspreads and pillow shams and that sort of thing that she had in there. And the third little room
was the kitchen, where we had the old wood stove, and my sister and I would gather up the wood for cooking. Whenever they would have one of these big church meetings, usually, some minister or some delegate or somebody from the church would come to our house and they would have this one room that we were permitted to peep in once a week. But the church did, it served as a gathering place for people and they had many union meetings for example between mostly Methodist and Baptist faiths.

**What exactly do you mean by union meetings?**

I mean the two different groups would go in together for some function.

*I'm wondering now about your first impressions of Beloit. You moved almost a thousand miles north to a new community, and I'm wondering what your first impressions were.*

Well, I can remember how cold it was when we got off the train at the Northwestern Station. We came here in April, and my grandfather was supposed to have found a place for us to live. We got here and found we had no place to go, so we were carried to a place on Pleasant Street, across from the college campus. It was a big storefront then. There's a little church building there now, but that's the first place that we lived when we came to Beloit here. Two or three days after we came we had snow, and of course it was cold. Then we went to school. We started to school. A strong school and the principal's name at that time was a Mrs. Horseman, and I remember they put me back a grade because I didn't have art or music or something like that. But I was much farther ahead in mathematics and that sort of thing than my classmates were. That I remember and some of my classmates--Isaac Buckridge and Cecil Carroll and his sister, Lois, and Don Benwort were some of the classmates that I remember.

**Did you say you were ahead of your classmates? How did that happen, because you described a school in Mississippi that wasn't very good?**

That is true. But one of the things that they emphasized was reading, writing, and mathematics. Those were three important things, and we worked on those in school and as I told you before this Mr. Wetherall had given us these schoolbooks and my mother encouraged us to go ahead with these things.

*Given the opportunities that were available in the North, why did anyone decide to stay in Mississippi?*

Well, I think that it was a lack of knowledge of about what the North had to offer until these agents came there to get them to come up here to work.

*You were leaving at least a few of your relatives and friends behind. How did you feel about those people that you left behind and weren't ever going to see again?*

Well, I think it comes back to a matter of trying to exist, really, and trying to improve your own lot.

*Were there any differences that you noticed between those people who left and those people who stayed?*

No. Not really.

*Were the people who left more ambitious or anything like that?*

No. I think not, because many of those who stayed had either begun to acquire a small plot of land or something like that and there were black tradesmen, like I say, the carpenters and the masons and that sort of thing, who had been able to improve their own lot in Mississippi. And many of those stayed and some came North. Most of these people, I think, that came North at first were people who hadn't been able to acquire anything.

*I have heard it said that black people came to Beloit in very unfavorable circumstances, that they were herded on to trains and that sort of thing. What do you remember about the actual train ride from Pontotoc to Beloit?*

I don't remember a situation like that. Of course, it may have been because of the fact that we...
paid our own way, you know. One thing I do recall, I think it was when we got in Illinois. See, before we came, got to Illinois, black people always rode in the front coach up near the engine of the train so they would get all the soot and dust and what have you, and then when we reached Illinois, if you wanted to change you could go anywhere on the train you wanted to. So they had this Jim Crow section that we rode on until we reached Illinois.

**Was the Jim Crow car a regular train car? How would you describe it in relation to the other cars?**

I guess you would you say it was the coach. They had coaches. Deluxe sections of the train.

**Now, as far as you recall, were most of those who came up at the time you did able to pay their own way, or did most rely on Fairbanks Morse money, I guess, would be the alternative?**

Well, I think those that came along with us--husbands had already come to Beloit and saved enough to send back to their families. But many of the men, they were probably the ones that were herded on trains and brought here and they worked at Fairbanks and paid back their transportation and that sort of thing and saved up to send for their families.

**Did your dad come up before the rest of the family?**

No. We all came at the same time. We all came at the same time.

**Was that a typical situation? I think you indicated that the man often came up early.**

Yes, that was true. Many of the husbands and fathers came up first. And then they would send back for their families.

**Just to get the record straight, as far as you recall, what would have been the most common situation?**

The manner, I think, where the husband would come first.

**I'm wondering about African-American businesses in and around Beloit.**

Well, at that time, there were no blacks in any business, that is, any white business or anything like that. There were no clerks in the retail stores, not even stock boys in grocery stores and that sort of thing. Of course that changed in later years. As a matter of fact right now many grocery stores that I know black people patronize, they don't have [black] checkout girls, for example or stock boys. In the early twenties there were a few black businesses here. There was a tailor and a dry cleaning establishment, and there was a shoe repair shop that I recall.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Briefly summarize the reasons why the White family moved to Wisconsin.
2. What year did Rubie White's family move to Wisconsin? What was happening in the United States at this time? Why were employment recruiters visiting Mississippi?
3. How did plantation owners exercise such a high degree of control over workers with the sharecropper system?
4. Why might skilled African Americans have decided to stay in the South?
5. How would you characterize Rubie Bond's overall attitude toward life in Wisconsin?
6. According to Bond, what were some of the differences between her education in Pontotoc and her education in Beloit?
8. As you read the transcript of this oral history, consider some of the strengths and weaknesses of oral history as a source.
9. Why would a topic such as the migration of poor African Americans from the rural South to industrial cities be important to document with oral history?
10. Compare and contrast the reasons why African Americans moved to Wisconsin with those of other ethnic groups featured in the Finding a Home programs.

**Suggested Activity**

1. Have students think of other topics in the recent past that would be good oral history projects. Perhaps they have friends or relatives who have interesting stories to tell. Then