

RACE
AND
REUNION

THE CIVIL WAR IN
AMERICAN MEMORY

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The BELKNAP PRESS of
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into one another. Together they form the conflicted determination of a people to forge new and free identities in a society committed to sectional reconciliation, even at the cost of forgetting the legacy and claims of its African American citizens.

NINE

Black Memory and Progress of the Race

We do not forget that even in the North much greater consideration is shown the white man who attempted the dissolution of this government than to the black man who served it. The poetry of the "Blue and the Gray" is much more acceptable than the song of the black and the white.

—CHRISTIAN RECORDER, July 13, 1890

IN THE THREE DECADES following the twentieth anniversary of emancipation, several strains of black Civil War memory—what we might call *attitudes toward the past*—emerged in American culture: the slave past as a dark void, a lost epoch, even as paralytic burden; a celebratory-accommodationist mode of memory, rooted in Booker T. Washington's philosophy of industrial education and the "progress of the race" rhetoric that set in all over a culture obsessed with the "race problem"; a view of black destiny that combined Pan-Africanism, millennialism, and Ethiopianism—the tradition (more a theory of history than a political movement) that anticipated the creation of an exemplary civilization, perhaps in Africa or in the New World, and which saw American emancipation as one part of a long continuum of Christian development; an African American patriotic memory, characterized by the insistence that the black soldier, the Civil War Constitutional Amendments, and the story of emancipation ought to be at the center of the nation's remembrance; and a tragic vision of the war as the nation's fated but unfinished passage through a catastrophic transformation from an old order to a new one. These strains of memory are not definitive; all could overlap and flow

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, January 1, 1883, in Washington, D.C., an American flag hung at the end of a banquet room on Ninth Street, and a sumptuous feast for more than fifty men filled the table bedecked with flowers and candles. At half past seven in the evening, the twentieth anniversary to the day of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, former U.S. senator from Mississippi Blanche K. Bruce called the distinguished gathering of African American leaders to the table in honor of Frederick Douglass. The *Washington Bee* remarked that "never before in the history of the American negro has there ever been such an assemblage of leading colored men." The elaborate dinner honored the sixty-four-year-old Douglass, the famed abolitionist, autobiographer, and now elder statesman of the Republican Party establishment. On this occasion, Douglass served as black America's principal symbol of a people's journey from slavery to freedom.¹

The guests represented a who's who of two generations of black politicians, civil servants, journalists, writers, professors, ministers, and soldiers. Prominent among them were Bruce as chair, the pan-Africanist scholar Edward Blyden, the former emigrationist, soldier, and politician Martin Delany, and the heroic wartime boat pilot and later Congressman from South Carolina Robert Smalls. Professors Richard T. Greener and James M. Gregory of Howard University were but two among a group of academics. The young historian George Washington Williams led the contingent of writers. The Reverend Benjamin T. Tanner, editor of the *Christian Recorder*, and T. Thomas Fortune, the bold, young editor of the *New York Globe*, headlined the ranks of newspapermen. The War Department clerk and Congressional Medal of Honor winner Christian A. Fleetwood appeared and was addressed as "Captain." Douglass's two sons, Charles and Lewis, veterans of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts regiment, attended the tribute to their father. Among the gathering were Congressmen and members of legislatures from South and North, men who owned their own businesses and ministers of prominent churches. Some among them had disagreed fiercely with one another about issues and strategies for best advancing the race—and many had argued with Douglass himself, a fact the guest of honor freely acknowledged.²

Rivalries were left at the door. Perhaps most important of all, the generational divide was put aside for at least one evening of celebration. This was a night to contemplate the meaning of emancipation and to celebrate what the men present believed to be the new founding for their country and their people.

As the gentlemen settled in for a long evening (they did not adjourn until 3 A.M.), some forty-one toasts were offered to virtually every aspect of black life and aspiration, as well as to heroes of the antislavery cause. It was a men-only banquet (no women writers or leaders were invited), and one toast was offered to "the ladies." When introduced, Douglass delivered a speech in which he reached for the lodestar of recent American history. To hear Douglass on these occasions must have been to feel one's inheritance, to almost see history flowing as a procession in time. Who were black people in America at this moment of remembrance in 1883? According to Douglass, they were a people reborn with emancipation, and a new nation had been born as well. "This high festival of ours is coupled with a day which we do well to hold in sacred and everlasting honor," Douglass declared, "a day memorable alike in the history of the nation, and in the life of an emancipated people." Reflection on this day, continued the aging orator, opened "a vast wilderness of thought and feeling . . . it is one of those days which may well count for a thousand years."³

Fortune later recollected the evening as a transcendent experience. Normally, said the New York editor, he found Washington, D.C. "depressing" and "nauseating" in its political cynicism. "But the Douglass banquet, a spontaneous tribute of love, respect, honor, and veneration," he declared, "bridged over many a sigh . . . Indeed, the Douglass banquet was an event in the history of the race." Fortune forgot for the moment his own harsh criticism of Douglass's symbolic role and acknowledged the event as one for the transmission of memory, where "tender youth" were instructed by "mature age." Douglass, in Fortune's words, "bent low his majestic head of snowy whiteness and received with pleasurable emotions the homage of a host of men of his race, the majority of whom were unborn or in their infancy when he was thundering against the iniquity of the slave power." What unified the disparate gathering, Fortune believed, was the "cause of the race" and "gratitude and love" for Douglass.⁴ With a combination of that love and differing agendas, the young men present that night went forth to do battle for America's memory of their freedom.

Douglass, no doubt, made their hearts pound and their throats choke. He filled the room with Civil War memory and gave to the occasion an incantatory refrain that he used some fifteen times in a breathless expression of the nation's rebirth. "Until this day," he said,

Slavery, the sum of all villainies, like a vulture, was gnawing at the heart of the Republic; until this day there stretched away behind us an awful chasm of darkness and despair of more than two centuries; until this day the American slave, bound in chains, tossed his fettered arms on high and groaned for freedom's gift in vain; until this day the colored people of the United States lived in the shadow of death . . . and had no visible future . . . until this day it was doubtful whether liberty and union would triumph, or slavery and barbarism. Until this day victory had largely followed the arms of the Confederate army. Until this day the mighty conflict between the North and the South appeared to the eye of the civilized world as destitution of moral qualities. Until this day . . .

From the hour of emancipation, Douglass argued, the American republic had risen from its historic "spell of inconsistency and weakness," and black folk had seen the "first gray streak of morning after a long and troubled night." In these visions, Douglass lent more than sermonic flourish to the narrative of black Civil War memory. He took the central idea in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—national rebirth and redefinition—and rendered it palpable as "felt history."⁵ Here was the emancipationist vision of Civil War memory given the mythic power it would need to survive in the national imagination and in black communities. Against those heralding reconciliation and those carrying the banner of the Lost Cause, Douglass urged vigilance at the flame of black freedom and justice.

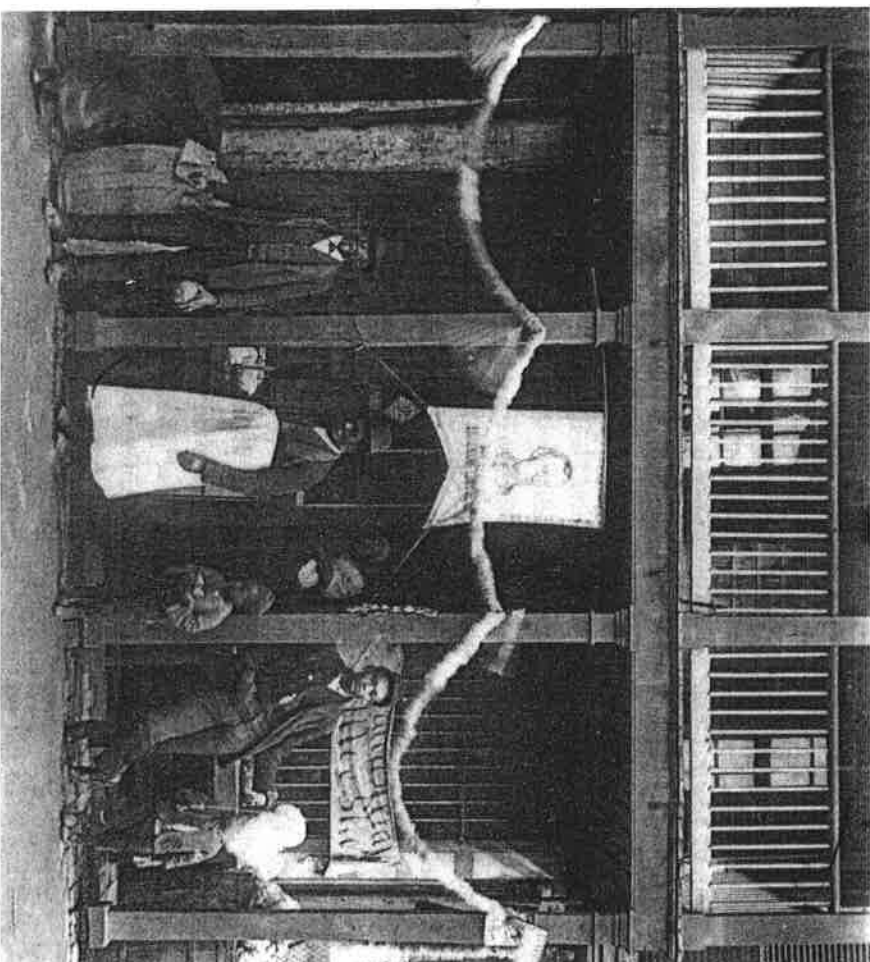
ALL ACROSS THE LAND in that anniversary year of 1883, as well as for decades to follow, blacks continued to commemorate emancipation and Union victory. Their world had undergone a seismic change in 1861–65, and they did their best to forge a memory community that could keep their story at the center of national attention. Commemorating black freedom and the preservation of the Union came easy on days of celebration, but not in daily life or in the nation's treacherous politics of memory. While Southern Lost

Cause advocates struggled to win a long-term victory out of what they came to see as the short-term defeat of the Confederacy; blacks and their white allies sustained a determined, if divided, struggle to themselves avoid the wasteland of lost causes. Remembering the thrill of emancipation, experiencing the pride of citizenship, witnessing the growth of black education and intellectual achievement, and building new black institutions all afforded the emancipationist vision fertile ground in which to take root.⁶

The story of the centrality of slavery and emancipation to Civil War history and memory made sense to most blacks. But the comfort for African Americans in looking back was not easily achieved. The clanging of the medals on a black veteran's jacket at a parade, the freedom anthems sung at commemorations, or the swarming crowds at black exhibitions about racial "progress" sometimes rang hollow against the screeching realities of lynchings, the degradation of blackface minstrelsy, the bleakness of poverty, and the insults of segregation. African Americans could not afford the despair born of short-term defeats, however; their sense of history had to embrace a long view, a faith that at least since 1863 time, God, and the weight of history might be on their side. As Ralph Ellison aptly put it, "Negro American consciousness is not a product (as so often seems true of so many American groups) of a will to historical forgetfulness. It is a product of our memory, sustained and constantly reinforced by events, by our watchful waiting, and by our hopeful suspension of final judgment as to the meaning of our grievances."⁷

With confidence and watchful waiting, black communities remembered their war and emancipation on all anniversary occasions. During 1883, black GAR posts held marches and public meetings from Massachusetts to Ohio, sometimes joining with white veterans in integrated gatherings. In Ohio, black GAR posts, which mobilized veterans of three regiments and booked special excursion trains, planned the largest gathering ever of their members for August in the town of Chillicothe. In New York, the Thaddeus Stevens post met in lower Manhattan in January 1883 for speeches and glee club entertainment. The following month, the William Lloyd Garrison post welcomed several other black posts from as far away as Hartford, Connecticut, and mixed with white veterans at the Bridge Street AME Church in Brooklyn for a full dress march and a choir performance. The Shaw Guards (named for Colonel Robert Gould Shaw) in Boston held frequent meetings, bringing together the surviving black rank and file with white officers of the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Massachusetts regiments. On Memorial Day,

1883, at Rainsford Island, Massachusetts, Julius C. Chappelle, the lone black member of that state's legislature, addressed a public ceremony conducted by black veterans. Chappelle predicted that the day was at hand when all civil rights will "be accorded us in South Carolina as well as we now enjoy in Massachusetts, in Texas as well as in Maine." For at least one stunning moment in Richmond, Virginia, on that same Decoration Day, 1883, a newly organized black GAR post in the former Confederate capital joined with a post from Worcester, Massachusetts (and probably at least one other Northern black post) in a parade to a cemetery. Most remarkably, some members of the R. E. Lee post of Confederate veterans participated as well, formally present-



Emancipation Day (January 1) became a major celebration in African American communities, North and South, as seen in this storefront in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888, which is decorated with flags, bunting, and a banner displaying Abraham Lincoln's image. (Cook Collection, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia)

ing floral arrangements to the black veterans and to a black women's memorial association. The circumstances of this interracial cooperation on Decoration Day can only be surmised. But surely William Mahone's Readjuster movement (with its interracial political appeal) influenced the occasion. The Readjusters had just peaked in their control of the Virginia government, although they were soon to be overthrown in that year's fall elections.⁸ Such possibilities for racial reconciliation amidst the culture of national reunion and white supremacy in the South were doomed to a sporadic and short life.

But confident memory prevailed at many black commemorations in that special year. On February 14, 1883, a Lincoln Day gathering of blacks from several towns met despite snowstorms in Meriden, Connecticut. Positioned around the hall were shields bearing the names of at least two dozen black and white abolitionist heroes, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lucretia Mott, James McCune Smith, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Robert Purvis, William Wilberforce, and others. On the walls were hung pictures of Lincoln, John Brown, Charles Sumner, James Garfield, U. S. Grant, and the late Republican governor of Connecticut Marshall Jewell, who had just died. Several white politicians addressed the gathering. Local black leaders, such as Walter H. Burr of Norwich, also spoke, delivering reminiscences of the antislavery movement, calls to action for "wiping out the color line," and tributes to black veterans. The racially integrated celebration ended with the singing of "John Brown's Body" and "America."⁹ Such scenes large and small, some integrated and many not, would be repeated at countless emancipation celebrations for the next three decades, with similar symbols adorning halls or the altars of churches.

One of the most extraordinary celebrations during 1883 occurred in Washington, D.C., in April, on the twenty-first anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Washington blacks differed over whether to conduct such a celebration at a time when the condition of their people was anything but secure. But the April 16 parade was one of the most elaborate that blacks had ever staged in an American city. The line of march was a mile and a half long, with several bands and some 150 "chariots" and carriages. The procession was led by Colonel P. H. Carson, who in his uniform and feathered hat reminded watchers of Toussaint L'Ouverture; he was followed by eighteen mounted black policemen. Then followed a dozen military companies, groups of veterans, and drill teams. Behind the military contingents marched representatives of more than twenty-five civic organizations and social clubs, including the Ethiopian Minstrels, the Sons and Daughters

of Liberty, the West Washington Union Labor Association, various district queens in their decorated chariots, the Brick Machine Union, the Cosmetic Social Club, the Knights of Labor with four horses and the Goddess of Liberty on a throne, the Paper Hangers Union, and the Rick's Park chariot carrying two beer kegs. Following this demonstration of black Washington's social life and labor activism came the proud representatives of some ten fraternal orders.¹⁰

Later that evening at the First Congregational Church, Frederick Douglass spoke to a racially mixed audience and called them to vigilance in the cause of black liberty and citizenship. "As the war for the Union recedes into the past," admonished Douglass, "and the negro is no longer needed to assault forts and stop rebel bullets, he is in some sense of less importance. Peace with the old master class has been war for the negro. As the one has risen the other has fallen." The implications of the cultural turn toward reconciliation for blacks could hardly have been more starkly expressed. Douglass left the celebratory audience that night with a cautionary tale of how and why "the negro" was America's "inexhaustible topic of conversation." What loomed as the greatest legacy of the war, he asked? "Americans can consider almost any other question more calmly and fairly than this one," he declared. "I know of nothing outside of religion, which kindles more wrath, causes wider differences, or gives force . . . to . . . more irreconcilable antagonisms." In the face of rising fears about the betrayal of their rights and new forms of violence, Douglass asked his listeners for clear-eyed forbearance. "There is no modern Joshua who can command this orb of popular discussion to stand still," he said. "As in the past, so in the future, it [the race question] will go on."¹¹ However resplendently they celebrated, the struggle of the race against the swell of the reunion, Douglass insisted, would never really end.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1883, a debate ensued among black leaders over whether to convene a national convention to bring their grievances to the attention of the nation. State conventions of black civic and religious leaders were still common occurrences in these years, with some advocating independence from the Republican Party. But other black spokesmen believed that the day for separate black conventions had passed with the war and the Constitutional victories of Reconstruction. Still others, like Fortune, resisted a convention initially planned for Washington, preferring a Southern city where "the problem for solution is to be found." Eventually a national assembly of more than one hundred black leaders from virtually every state met in Louisville, Kentucky, in late September. After intense debate, the as-

sembly officially refused to endorse President Chester Arthur and the Republican Party. The convention's resolutions included an appeal to memory. The delegates announced their gratitude for "the miraculous emancipation" and adopted the language of national rebirth. But the bulk of their eleven resolutions were demands for the enforcement of civil and political rights, protests against prevailing economic conditions, and an insistence on equal education for black youth. The convention pronounced the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment and the civil rights legislation of Reconstruction "nothing more than dead letters."¹² Twenty years after emancipation, it threw a bleak picture of African American conditions at the feet of the nation.

Douglass delivered the keynote address at Louisville, striking the year's mixed chords of proud remembrance and embittered betrayal. His widely reprinted speech challenged the nation to acknowledge the birchrights of African Americans. "Born on American soil in common with yourselves," he said to whites (the nation), "we, like yourselves, hold ourselves to be in every sense Americans," and having "watered your soil with our tears, enriched it with our blood . . . we deem it no arrogance . . . to manifest now a common concern with you for its welfare." Douglass then provided the Civil War generation's precursor of Du Bois's famous statement that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." The "feeling of color madness" and the "atmosphere of color hate," he declared, pervaded churches, courts, and schools, and worse, the deepest "sentiment" of ordinary people. So conditioned were whites to see blacks as inferior, said Douglass, that "in his [the Negro's] downward course he meets with no resistance, but his course upward is resented at every step of his progress." In Douglass's metaphors, the color line stalked like a wild animal and infected human organisms like a dreaded disease. "In all relations of life and death," he told the American people, "we are met by the color line. It hunts us at midnight . . . denies us accommodation . . . excludes our children from schools . . . compels us to pursue only such labor as will bring us the least reward."¹³

But Douglass asserted that where the "laws were righteous" the right could yet prevail. Black freedom, he reminded those who would listen, had not come from the "sober dictates of wisdom, or from any normal condition of things." Emancipation and the nation's new founding, he cautioned, "came across fields of smoke and fire strewn with . . . bleeding and dying men. Not from the Heaven of Peace amid the morning stars, but from the hell of war." The long legacy of that central fact, Douglass believed, guaranteed an endur-

ing passion of "deadly hate and a spirit of revenge" at the heart of all attempts to work through the memory of the war.¹⁴ That the revolution of 1863 came from the "hell of war" and that forces were now arrayed to permanently reverse that revolution, remained the tortured challenge before African Americans and the nation as a whole.

The delegates from the Louisville convention had hardly returned home when the U.S. Supreme Court landed a bombshell in the lap of black America. A group of civil rights cases had been pending before the Supreme Court throughout the year, including one in Kansas and another in Missouri of blacks denied accommodations at inns, a case from California of rejection from a theater, and a variety of instances of exclusion from first-class railway cars. The ruling in *United States v. Stanley* (also known as the civil rights cases) held that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment applied only to states; a person wronged by racial discrimination, therefore, could look for redress only from state laws and courts. In effect, the decision meant that the discriminatory acts of private persons were beyond the safeguards of the Fourteenth Amendment and federal jurisdiction. In relegating enforcement of civil rights laws only to state authority, the court struck down the Civil Rights Act of 1875, rendering the entire meaning and intent of the Civil War Constitutional Amendments "sacrificed," as the lone dissenter, John Marshall Harlan, put it. The door was now open for the eventual passage of Jim Crow laws across the South.¹⁵

In the variety of African American responses to the 1883 Supreme Court decision, we can discern differing modes of black Civil War memory. At a mass meeting in Washington, D.C., Douglass tried to capture the pain and fear most blacks felt. "We have been . . . grievously wounded . . . in the house of our friends," he proclaimed. The Chief Justice in these years, Morrison R. Waite, was an Ohio Republican, and there were only two Southerners, both Republicans, and one Democrat from California on the high court. Douglass described a "national deterioration" of moral and political commitment to black rights with the "increasing distance from the time of the war." Justice for blacks, he contended, had lost ground from "the hour that the loyal North . . . began to shake hands over the bloody chasm." According to Douglass, the country was undergoing a failure of morality and national memory. The *Christian Recorder* counseled defiance, calling the decision "humiliating" and "maddening" and urging blacks to structure their lives within a segregated society. "Husband your resources," the AME organ told its read-

ers, "know once and for all that you must depend upon yourself." The commemorative spirit of an anniversary year now gave way to a deepening sense of betrayal. The *New York Globe* said the decision had made blacks feel "as if they had been baptized in ice water." The *Boston Hub* thought the ruling "worthy of the Republic fifty years ago," and the *Detroit Plaindealer* said the decision came "like an avalanche, carrying our fondest hopes down the hill of despair."¹⁶

Black clergy reacted to the civil rights decision with heightened appeals for racial self-reliance and uplift. Convinced that white prejudices could never be conquered, the Reverend I. F. Aldridge advised blacks "to get property, land, money, education, religion . . . , and we will get our rights and justice before the Supreme Court of heaven." Aldridge spoke for conservative black ministers who counseled against agitation for civil and political liberty and instead urged the race to "come together as one man, and build churches, hotels, railroads, and everything else to our interests." The reverend represented an old and persistent strain of black social thought, a variation of which Booker T. Washington would fashion into a national movement within a decade. As the weeks after the decision passed, Benjamin Tanner, editor of the *Christian Recorder*, took a somewhat more moderate position, cautioning readers to keep the peace and to put faith in the Constitutional separation of powers to right the recent judicial wrong.¹⁷

But as blacks debated the meaning of the Supreme Court's ruling, perhaps the harshest reaction came from AME bishop Henry McNeal Turner. Already a staunch proponent of black emigration to Africa before 1883, Turner never one to mince words, stepped up his calls to leave the country. He demanded a more intense race pride among blacks, and he gave up on American political institutions. "Those who suppose . . . that the remedy for our ills is to be found in national legislation or supreme court decisions," he wrote in June 1883, "are greatly mistaken." In an interview with a Saint Louis paper in November 1883, Turner charged that the Supreme Court decision absolved "the Negro's allegiance to the general government, makes the America flag to him a rag of contempt . . . reduces the majesty of the nation to an aggregation of ruffianism, opens all the issues of the late war." Turner's position was uncompromising: "As long as that decision is the law of the land I am a rebel to this nation."¹⁸

Howard University professor B. K. Sampson, claiming the court action was "not a finality," probably spoke for a large segment of educated blacks in

resisting Turner. Sampson despised the decision, but he invoked African American sacrifice in a litany of Civil War battles and counseled confidence that "the public mind is softening as it ripens." Blacks could "afford to be loyal still," Sampson believed, because "Christianity and civilization" were on their side. As Turner spent the next twenty years trying to civilize and redeem Africa, other African Americans, with divergent views of the past and competing strategies of uplift, would struggle with how best to live with the realities that the civil rights decision had put in motion. With the color line sharpening, the black community faced decisions over just how to compete for its place in America's collective memory. Should blacks embrace or reject the nation they had helped to preserve and reinvent? Should they celebrate their own past, or lament its agonies? Should they fight the Lost Cause and segregation, or retreat into group self-development? Should they, in season and out, remind the country of their former enslavement, or simply not look back? Most African Americans heeded some version of the warning of Joseph C. Price, the young black educator and founder of Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. "The South was more conquered than convinced," said Price in 1890; "it was overpowered rather than fully persuaded. The Confederacy surrendered its sword at Appomattox, but did not there surrender its convictions."¹⁹

LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY BLACKS commonly referred to the era of slavery as a kind of historical void, a long dark night of denial and futility. For many this attitude flew in the face of experience and memory. Freedpeople knew that they had lived useful, creative lives; they could see what they had built and remember what they had imagined. For many, their faith reminded them that they were forever part of a purposeful history. Many others had to face a past they could never come to terms with, a formative experience that may have impoverished their minds and ravaged their bodies. Remembering slavery was, thus, a paradoxical memory: it was a world of real experience, one complicated by relationships with whites that were both horrible and endearing and enriched or traumatized by their own family and community relations. Slavery was also a collective racial experience in which it was difficult to take pride when the larger society looked on with so much amusement and contempt. Indeed, any perusal of the heart-rending advertisements in black newspapers by the 1880s for loved ones sepa-

rated from families during slavery or the war demonstrates both the vitality and the destruction of family life. Looking back was not easy, but it was also unavoidable.

The emotional legacy in the personal advertisements was one of loss. The search for kin in newspapers began even before the war ended. In the summer of 1865, the national black paper, the *Christian Recorder*, ran numerous appeals demonstrating that slavery and emancipation had caused a new diaspora. Writing from Crawfordsville, Indiana, Elizabeth Ann Jackson sought the whereabouts of two sisters and two brothers last seen in Virginia. Sold away from Virginia to New Orleans ten years before, Hannah Cole hoped to find her son, John, "the only child I have and I desire to find him much."²⁰ Sale and separation dominated the memories of many ex-slaves seeking their lost families.

By the 1880s, many freedpeople still desperately searched and waited. Thomas Cooper wrote from New Jersey, hoping for news of his mother, father, two brothers, two sisters, and his only daughter. In the chaos of the war, he had last seen his daughter in Kentucky and recollected that the rest of his family had been "sold in Virginia by William Goult." Many who submitted these notices could remember precise details of masters, traders, buyers, and locations in the South. They remembered many facts, but had no control over fate. Celia Poole of Iowa could name her owners and buyers through more than twenty years of haze, but she was left only to write: "When quite young, I was sold with my mother and brother Aaron to traders. My mother was sold again soon after leaving home. Since then I have never heard of her." Searching for her mother in 1880, another woman's plea reflected her name: separated from her mother in 1852, she "was sold to a speculator by the name of Alex Hopkin and was brought to Georgia [from North Carolina] . . . my name is Patience."²¹

In 1881, Albert Butts of Brooklyn, New York, still advertised for his brother, William. "We parted at the battle of Antietam," wrote Albert, in a war memory oddly out of place amidst the soldiers' reminiscences of the 1880s. Thousands of black women spent their aging lives trying to reassemble lost families dislocated by emancipation's diaspora. The Butts brothers, probably camp hands or gravediggers for the Union forces, no doubt had many war stories to tell. But no major magazine solicited the tales of many freedpeople and black war veterans. If they had, the culture of reconciliation taking hold in the 1880s might have included the epic of emancipation. That

epic would be uncovered nearly a century later in scholarship and by the rediscovery of slave narratives.²² But as Blue-Gray fraternalism grew in popularity, no such understanding of the effects of slavery and emancipation on African Americans penetrated the historical consciousness of most Americans.

The names, places, and unrequited hopes expressed in freedmen's advertisements provide a glimpse of how ordinary black individuals and families privately, as well as publicly, rejected the plantation legend. As Thomas Nelson Page's and Joel Chandler Harris's endearing uncles narrated story after story of slave loyalty and nostalgia for the Old South, black survivors of slavery named the names of "speculators" who had sold them and their kin into a deeper South. It was America's national tragedy that the memories of slavery that were popularized and sold in the last decades of the nineteenth century were the romantic fantasies of dialect writers, not the actual remembrance of ex-slaves themselves. Unfortunately, stories of slave sales, of displaced black migrants seeking new lives in new places, of the deprivation and humiliation of slavery, did not sell in a culture eager to purchase tales of reunion and soldiers' glory. How could a nation reunify itself by telling its epic through the experience of slavery and its consequences? Far better to root the new national narrative in a heritage of mutual heroism and in yearning for a lost civilization crushed by industrialization and an unavoidable war. To this day, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, much of Civil War nostalgia is still rooted in the fateful memory choices made in the latter two decades of the nineteenth century. As the *Christian Recorder* put it in 1890, "the poetry of the 'Blue and the Gray' is much more acceptable than the song of the black and the white."²³

By the 1880s and 1890s, North or South, in a city or in a sharecropper's shack, where did most African Americans look for a safe haven in the past? Where could they find themselves a part of some uplifting history in the age of Progress? In what narrative did they root their fragile citizenship? What American story could they own? For many, looking back into the past forced an encounter with the shame of slavery. In an age that exalted self-made business titans, when Christianity stressed personal responsibility, and in a culture riven by theories of inherent racial characteristics, blacks carried the stigma of bondage. When Tourgée wrote in 1888 of blacks facing a slave past of "only darkness replete with unimaginable horrors," he only echoed a discourse well under way among blacks themselves. Bondage had left the collective "injury of slavery," said *Christian Recorder* editor Benjamin Tanner in

1878. "The very remembrance of our experience is hideous." In 1887, Tanner's paper ran a poem, "Keep Out of the Past," by Emma Wheeler Wilcox, which had an unmistakable meaning for blacks:

Keep out of the past! for its highways
Are damp with malarial gloom.

Its gardens are sere, and its forests are drear,
And everywhere moulders a tomb . . .

Keep out of the past! It is haunted.

He who in its avenues gropes

Shall find there the ghost of a joy prized the most,
And a skeleton throng of dead hopes. . .

Keep out of the past! It is lonely

And barren and bleak to the view,

Its fires have grown cold and its stories are old,

Turn, turn to the present, the new!

Hence, in a thousand settings, from magazine articles to sermons, from emancipation exhibitions to anniversaries, and in private communication, many blacks tended to consider slavery as an American prehistory that was painful to revisit. As the black sociologist Kelly Miller put it, "in order to measure . . . progress, we need a knowledge of the starting-point as well as a fixed standard of calculation. We may say that the Negro began at the zero point, with nothing to his credit but the crude physical discipline of slavery."²⁴ With this notion of emancipation as the *zero point* of group development, blacks risked reflection on their past and measured their progress.

Among the remarkable range of memories recalled in interviews with ex-slaves conducted in the twentieth century are many expressions of the sheer agony of remembering slavery at all. Delia Garlic, who had been sold several times and enslaved in three states, told of the sale of her "babies" to "speculators." "I could tell you 'bout it all day, but even den you couldn't guess de awfulness of it." Some former slaves may have exorcised their anger in the act of reconstructing their memories. "I's hear tell of dem good slave days," said a Texan, Jenny Proctor, "but I ain't nev'r seen no good times den." Her story was one of separation from kin and "cotton patch" labor. Born around 1858, Sarah Wooden Johnson of Petersburg, Virginia, wondered why her interviewer, Susie Byrd (also black), wanted to know so much of her past.

"Now dont ax me no mo' 'bout dat," Sarah admonished Susie. "What in de world is you gwine do wid all dis here longy, longy go stuff . . . ? Ha, ha, ha. Say you is writin' hist'ry? A slave ain't had no say so of his own 'til de 'render [surrender] come and he was sot free. Glory, glory gall . . . Dar's back stuff honey. Dis here is new time. Let dar be." Angry or painful memories are not the same thing as shame. Indeed, it is difficult to know when ex-slaves felt shame or when they merely exhibited a stoical disposition to not look backward. In ex-slave memory, one finds expressions of shame sometimes mixed with conservative nostalgia and intraracial contempt. Former North Carolina house servant Sarah Debro looked back at age ninety and declared: "My folks dont want me to talk about slavery, they's shame niggers ever was slaves. But, while for most colored folks freedom is the best, they's still some niggers that ought to be slaves now." Debro seems never to have abandoned her sense of class distinction as handmaid to her mistress. "I look back and thinks," she said. "I ain't never forgot them slavery days, and I ain't never forgot Miss Polly and my white starched aprons."²⁵

At the end of the 1930s, when most of the slave narratives were recorded as part of the federal WPA project, the novelist Richard Wright, in his lyrical history of African Americans, *Twelve Million Black Voices* (1941), left a pained expression about the endurance of slavery's shadow. "When we compare our hopelessness with the vast vistas of progress around us," wrote Wright, "when we feel self-disgust at our bare lot, when we contemplate our lack of courage in the face of daily force, we are seized with a desire to escape our shameful identification."²⁶ A profound sense of grievance over the ravages and legacies of slavery and sharecropping, about the numbing persistence of poverty, animate Wright's work. That desire among blacks to escape the past was many decades old by the time Wright penned his proletarian manifesto of black history.

Black intellectuals of the late nineteenth century differed, often fiercely, over just how historically minded their people ought to be. At Storor College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, on Memorial Day, May 30, 1885, Alexander Crummell, one of the most distinguished black intellectuals, gave a commencement address, "The Need of New Ideas and New Aims for a New Era," to the graduates of the institution founded for freedmen at the end of the war. Crummell, an Episcopal priest educated at the abolitionist Oneida Institute in upstate New York and at Cambridge University in England in the 1840s, had spent nearly twenty years as a missionary and an advocate of African nationalism in Liberia (1853-71). Although Crummell could not resist ac-

knowledging Harpers Ferry's associations with John Brown as a setting "full of the most thrilling memories in the history of our race," he hoped to turn the new generation of blacks, most of whom were born just before or during the war, away from dwelling "morbidly and absorbingly upon the servile past"; instead, they should embrace the urgent "needs of the present." As a minister and theologian, and as a social conservative, Crummell was concerned not only with racial uplift—his ultimate themes were family, labor, industrial education, and especially moral improvement—but also with the unbundling of young blacks from what he perceived as the "painful memory of servitude."²⁷

Blacks, Crummell believed, were becoming a people paralyzed by "fanatical anxieties upon the subject of slavery." Black leaders seemed to "settle down in the dismal swamps of dark and distressful memory," and ordinary black folk fashioned life "too much after the conduct of the children of Israel." In his stern rebuke, Crummell made a distinction between memory and recollection. Memory, he contended, was a passive, unavoidable part of group consciousness; recollection, on the other hand, was active, a matter of choice, and dangerous in excess. "What I would fain have you guard against," he told the Storer graduates, "is not the memory of slavery, but the constant recollection of it." Such recollection, Crummell maintained, would only degrade racial progress; for him, unmistakably, "duty lies in the future."²⁸

Prominent in the audience that day at Harpers Ferry was Frederick Douglass. According to Crummell's own account, his call to reorient African American consciousness away from the past met with Douglass's "emphatic and most earnest protest." No verbatim account of what Douglass said at Harpers Ferry that day survives, but his many anniversary and Memorial Day speeches during the 1880s offer a clear picture of what he may have said. A healthy level of forgetting, said Douglass in 1884, was "Nature's plan of relief." But in season and out, Douglass insisted that whatever the psychological need of avoiding the woeful legacy of slavery, that legacy would resist all human effort at suppression. The history of African Americans, he remarked many times in the 1880s, could "be traced like that of a wounded man through a crowd by the blood."²⁹ Better to confront such a past, he believed, than to wait for its resurgence.

In his many postwar speeches about memory, Douglass would often admit that his own personal memory of slavery was best kept sleeping like a "half-forgotten dream." But he despised the politics of forgetting that the

culture of reconciliation demanded. "We are not here to visit upon the children the sins of the fathers," Douglass told a Memorial Day audience in Rochester in 1883, "but we are here to remember the causes, the incidents, and the results of the late rebellion." Most of all, Douglass objected to the historical construction that portrayed emancipation as a great national "failure." The growing argument (made by some blacks as well as whites) that slavery had protected and civilized blacks, while freedom had gradually sent them "falling into a state of barbarism," forced Douglass to argue for aggressive vigilance about memory. The problem was "not confined to the South," Douglass declared in 1888. "It [the theory of black degeneration coupled with historical misrepresentations of emancipation and Reconstruction] has gone forth to the North. It has crossed the ocean. It has gone to Europe, and it has gone as far as the wings of the press, and the power of speech can carry it."³⁰

Crummell and Douglass had great respect for each other, but they had very different personal histories and different agendas. Crummell had never been a slave; he achieved a classical education, was a missionary of evangelical Christianity and a thinker of conservative instincts, and had spent almost the entire Civil War era in West Africa. He returned to the United States twice during the war to recruit blacks to emigrate to Liberia, while Douglass worked aggressively as an advocate of emancipation and recruited approximately one hundred members of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts regiment. Crummell represented a brand of black nationalism that combined Western Christian civilizationalism and race pride. He contended that the principal problems faced by American blacks were moral weakness, self-hatred, and industrial primitiveness. Douglass, the former slave, had established his fame by writing and speaking about the meaning of slavery; his life's work and his very identity were inextricably linked to the transformations of the Civil War. The past made and inspired Douglass, and he had risen from slavery's prison; there was no meaning for him without memory, whatever the consequences of "recollection." The past also had made Crummell, but his connections to many of the benchmarks of African American social memory were tenuous and informed by African nationalism and Christian mission. For Douglass, emancipation and the Civil War were *felt* history, a moral and legal foundation upon which to demand citizenship and equality. For Crummell, they were potentially paralyzing memories—not the epic to be retold, but merely the source of future needs.³¹

Remembering slavery and emancipation thus became a forked road. Douglass's and Crummell's differing dispositions toward the past represent

two directions that black thought could go in the 1880s. Both sought racial uplift, but one would take the risk of sustaining a sense of historic grievance against America as the means of making the nation fulfill its promises; the other would look back only with caution and focus on group moral and economic regeneration. Crummell sought to redeem Africa, and to inspire moral values in the freedpeople by the example of an elite black leadership. Douglass embraced the same values but sought to redeem the civil and political rights established by the verdicts of Fort Wagner and Appomattox. Crummell had tried to be a founding father of Liberia; Douglass dearly wished to see himself as a founding father of a reinvented American republic. With differing aims, Crummell and Douglass both sought to teach a new generation of African Americans how to understand and use the legacy of slavery and the Civil War era, how to preserve and destroy the past.

That past lingered in the writings of many blacks who joined the chorus of racial uplift ideology in the late nineteenth century. In one of her moralistic poems, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a novelist and lecturer, wrote of the "Dying Bondman" (1884) who had once been a chieftain in Africa. On his deathbed he pleads with his kind master for his freedom:

"Master," said the dying chieftain,

"Home and friends I soon shall see;

But before I reach my country,

Master, write that I am free;"

"For the spirits of my fathers

Would shrink back from me in pride,

If I told them at our greeting

I a slave had lived and died . . ."

"Precious token" in hand, the old man dies "free" of the burden of telling his kinsmen in heaven that his life was forever strained with slavery. The idea of slavery as the burdensome past informed much black religious writing, whether or not, as was often the case, the authors converted that burden into evidence of racial progress. Slavery had "blasted" the "higher powers" of "the Negro," wrote one AME minister, and had forced him to drag its legacies around like "a relic of the infirmity of those years he carries in his heart and brain." Uplift advocates were acutely aware of the servile past. The novelist Pauline Hopkins wrote in the preface of her romantic novel about Reconstruction, *Contending Forces* (1900), of her sincere desire "to do all that I can

to raise the stigma of degradation from my race." Such a quest was particularly poignant for black women, who carried a special burden in seeking bourgeois respectability in a society that had for so long defined them only in maternal or sexual terms.³²

The future beckoned, but the past remained a heavy weight to carry. Forgetting might seem wise, but also perilous. To face the past was to court the agony of one's potential limitations, to wonder if the rabbits really could outwit the foxes or whether some creatures in the forest just did have history and breeding on their side. "As slavery was a degrading thing," Crummell had said in his Storer address, "the constant recalling of it to the mind serves, by the law of association, to degradation." Long before Du Bois wrote of a struggle with the "double consciousness" of being American and black, African American freedmen had to decide how to look backward and forward. Many may have been like the characters Toni Morrison created in *Beloved* (1987)—haunted by slavery's physical and psychic tortures, but desperate to live in peace and normalcy. When Paul D says to Sethe, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody, we need some kind of tomorrow," Morrison imagined herself into the heart of late-nineteenth-century black memory. Memory is sometimes that human burden we can live comfortably neither with nor without. Douglass believed that black memory was a weapon and that its abandonment was dangerous to his people's survival. Crummell argued that a people can "get inspiration and instruction in the *yesterdays* of existence, but we cannot healthily live in them."³³ The story of black Civil War memory demonstrates that both were right.

WITH EMANCIPATION widely viewed as a new creation, as the zero point of black racial development, a vast "progress of the race" rhetoric took hold in African American life and letters by the end of the nineteenth century. Part of this discourse was driven by the imperatives of uplift ideology: for the race to rise, build its own institutions, and defend itself against racist attacks and assumptions about group degeneration, the race's spokesmen had to demonstrate black advancement. Slavery might not always be mentioned in claims of racial progress, but it was the obvious presence behind most such expressions. The "progress of the race" and its implicit acknowledgment of slavery's legacy was, therefore, an inherent part of Booker T. Washington's accommodationist social philosophy and uplift strategy.

From the earliest stage of his public career to its end in 1915 during the

fiftieth anniversary of the Civil War, Washington gave countless addresses in which he portrayed emancipation as the time when "the Negro began life" anew. Such an assumption owed much to the then common view of black folk's African background as a cultural, linguistic, and moral void. "When the Negro went into slavery," Washington said in 1903, "he was without anything which might properly be called a language; when he came out of slavery he was able to speak the English tongue . . . when he entered slavery he had little working knowledge of agriculture, mechanics, or household duties; when he emerged . . . he was almost the entire dependence in a large section of our country for agricultural, mechanical and domestic labor." Moreover, in terms of religion, Washington contended in 1905, Africa equipped blacks only with "barbarous . . . feishism . . . a childish way of looking at and explaining the world." Out of bondage, they emerged Christians. Hence, Washington summed up the historic situation of blacks in America: "Slavery presented a problem of destruction; freedom presents a problem of construction. The latter requires patience, time, courage and toil, but in the end we shall reach our goal."³⁴ Booker Washington was a goal-driven man; he forged a compelling attitude toward the past and carried much of his people with him for nearly two decades.

Black ministers and editors frequently stressed how blacks faced a multiple need for "healing" from their African legacies of "ignorance," "poverty," and "immorality," as Benjamin Tanner put it. The greatest "wound" left by slavery and the African heritage, said Tanner in 1880, was the "curse of self-dispect." With these notions of African deficits, and the call for blacks to have "faith in one another," Tanner and others embraced the uplift ideology for which Washington became famous. For many black leaders, especially those inclined to a millennial view of history, slavery had been part of God's design, an anguished but perhaps necessary passage to a new age for the black race. In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1901), Washington made his own contribution to the image of the loyal slave. The "kindly and generous nature" of most slaves, and their refusal to harbor any "feelings of bitterness against the whites" during and after the war, led Washington to conclude that black folk had undergone a beneficent "school of slavery." He condemned slavery as an institution, but in such a way as to portray it as a necessary stage in a people's development. The slave experience showed "how Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose." Hence Washington's famous assertion that "notwithstanding the cruel wrongs . . . the black man got nearly as much out of slavery as the white man did."³⁵

The doctrine of divine Providence was very old in American religious thought, and black clerics, as well as secular leaders, employed it to varying ends. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner was a profound believer in Providential design. Turner believed that "slavery was a providential institution, not a divine institution." "There is a God that runs this universe," he said in 1888, and during slavery, he "was not asleep or oblivious to passing events." His faith in such a doctrine fueled Turner's optimism and energy for emigration to Africa, but it also led him to some odd assumptions about just how emancipation emerged out of the very war he had known so intimately. Turner attended Jefferson Davis's funeral in 1889, and at the impromptu call of white mourners, delivered a speech in which he praised Davis's steadfastness in the Confederate cause because it eventually led to black freedom. Such were the designs of Providence, Turner believed. *Christian Recorder* editor Benjamin Lee objected to Turner's logic about emancipation, as well as to the circumstances in which he delivered it. If a "mantle" was to be placed on Davis as "some merit due" for instigating emancipation by leading the Confederate revolution, said Lee, "as well throw the mantle over Satan . . . or Judas." Lee argued that Davis and "all his class" ought to be remembered by blacks only for their "characteristic deadness."³⁶ Measures of progress started with many different yardsticks, and emerged from a spirited debate over both the character of black history and the relative balance between God's sovereignty and human agency.

Turner's devotion to the doctrine of God's reign over history sustained him through decades of embitterment at America's betrayal of black rights. Although his emigrationism followed directly from his sense of Christian mission to the African "heathen," he did not share a belief in the African cultural void. Soon after arriving in Sierra Leone on his first of three visits to West Africa, Turner wrote back to America of the astonishing richness of African cultural and material life. "What fools we are," he wrote in November 1891, "to suppose these Africans are fools!"³⁷ Indeed, in this identification with a glorious African past, the religious-historical tradition of Ethiopianism took root among nineteenth-century African Americans.

Ethiopianism drew its inspiration from the most quoted verse in black religious thought: Psalms 68:31, "princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God." As a religious world view, it became a vision of black destiny, an explanation for slavery and emancipation, and a framework for collective memory. In Pan-African thought by the late nineteenth century, the terms Egypt and Ethiopian had become synonymous

with Africa and Africans, as well as a source of devotion to a theory of human development and the redemption of African peoples and cultures.³⁸ For Turner and many other black religious thinkers, Ethiopianism provided a way to explain a long historical continuum in which the agonies of slavery, the transformations of the Civil War, and the evils of racism and lynching in the 1890s fell into their appointed places in God's historical logic.

Black millennialism combined romanticism about African culture with a Christian, and in some ways distinctively black, view of history itself as a sacred drama. It combined apocalyptic tragedy with the optimism and determinism of the Second Coming of Christ. From sermons, and from the "race histories" and theological works written by blacks by the turn of the century, a spiritually reassuring form of memory emerged that helped many people cope with despair in the age of Jim Crow. Many blacks found not only a link to a glorious, if unrealizable, African background, but also a historical theodicy that provided them the spirit to redeem Africa, even if only symbolically. Such a theodicy also bred an especially useful critique of America, of its racism and its, as yet, unredeemed history. Perhaps African peoples were scattered into the Americas for a divine purpose; perhaps the Civil War's apparent inevitability was all God's plan. Out of suffering, even degradation and near destruction, would come the glory and prophecy of the lowly race rising to improve and rule the world in its final stage of development.³⁹

So went the arguments of many black theologians and historians, including George Washington Williams, whose histories of African Americans are stories about the fulfillment of an ultimate and sacred American progress. In the work of Peter Thomas Stanford, we find a thoroughgoing religious history. Born a slave in Hampton, Virginia, Stanford escaped to New York when he was twelve, where he was eventually converted to Christianity and educated through the support of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Highland Garner. In *The Tragedy of the Negro in America* (1898), Stanford told the story of slavery and emancipation as simply "God's record," in which all human history was a working out of divine justice, and black experience in America was a journey toward freedom. Slavery thus became the necessary travail of a race destined to rise from its suffering to redeem Africa and much of the rest of the world as well.⁴⁰

A sense of chosenness informs virtually all black millennial thought. As the Pan-Africanist Edward Blyden put it, God had ordained slavery; black Christian conversion, even American racism itself as a motivator, and he held the

interior peoples of Africa in readiness "until the time arrived for the emancipation of her children in the Western world."⁴¹ In this vision, black Civil War memory in America was not so much the beginning of a new history at year "zero" as it was one crucial turning point in the long chronicle of international race development and the coming of God's rule over history itself. Millennial expectation could take all shame out of the heritage of slavery; past suffering could be a badge of honor on the march to the new day coming. While during the Gilded Age many white Americans ached nostalgically for another world to live in—one of Southern gentility and military valor—black millennialists converted their past into a new future in which to live. With God as the only monitor of memory, and not publishers, presidents, or business elites, black millennialists plotted the historical reversals inherent in what Turner had called the "grand sequel" to slavery and the war.

Some black theologians, namely J. Max Barber, Theophilus Gould Steward, and James T. Holly, took black millennial history to its ultimate extent. They aimed to provide not only a usable past, but a sense of ultimate "racial triumph" for black folk in America. Writing just after the turn of the century, Barber interpreted emancipation as a millennial age in which black people would reverse the racial hierarchy and replace the "degenerating, morally putrid . . . avacious white man" with the "virile, puissant races in whose hearts there is mercy and justice." Worldwide, blacks were about to "have their turn at the wheel." In such interpretations, old collective memories could be discarded and new ones imagined. Steward, an AME minister writing in 1888, saw the end times at hand. The Saxon race had "accomplished its mission," he contended, and would end in self-ruination from its bloody reign of "conquest." White corruption of Christianity had given birth, though, to a truer Christianity that the darker races would carry forward into the millennial age. Hence the great events of the nineteenth century in America were merely the ordinary historical markers of God's design and the emancipated slaves were his victorious agents.⁴²

Holly, the Protestant Episcopal bishop of Haiti, also writing in the 1880s, saw the millennium unfolding in three historic ages, or "dispensations." The first phase of history, which had belonged to the Semitic race, was when the Holy Scriptures were written and preserved. The second phase, the evangelical age of Christianity, belonged to the Europeans, who spread the gospels across the globe. And the third phase, which was to belong to the Hamitic race, would be ushered in by apocalyptic warfare, after which the thou-

sand-year reign of the millennium would begin. During the latter stage of history, black peoples, the "elect among nations," would assume the "crowning work of the will of God . . . when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands directly unto God."⁴³ Black millennialists fashioned a racial memory that made a potentially shameful past both purposeful and ultimately a long prelude to moral and historical triumph. As an attitude toward the past, toward Africa, and toward America, Ethiopianism would remain enormously useful, though never dominant, in black thought, as late as the semicentennial of emancipation.

Although millennial thought was common among religious blacks, many leaders did not share Washington's notion of slavery as a "school," nor Turner's as a "providential institution." Crummell, for one, declared himself in "amazement that men of sense and reason can thus travesty plain, common English, and talk such senseless stuff" as slavery the "schoolmaster!" Himself a missionary, Crummell maintained that blacks "would have been more blessed and far superior, as pagans, in Africa than slaves on the plantations of the South." In the context of fierce disagreements over emigration among blacks in the 1880s, T. Thomas Fortune declared the notion of Africans being brought to America to "prepare themselves to evangelize Africa" as "so much religious nonsense boiled down to a sycophantic platitude." Moreover, the Reverend A. L. Ridgel, a staunch advocate of emigration, had no patience with the idea of slavery as providential. "I don't believe that Providence had anything to do with the establishment and perpetuation of an institution so vile and degrading," wrote Ridgel in 1896. Precisely because slavery's "imprint" was so "deep and lasting" on blacks, Ridgel urged them to emigrate to Africa where, he believed, they could build a confident future not possible in America.⁴⁴

SUCH STERN DISAGREEMENTS notwithstanding, Booker T. Washington's deep investment in "progress" rhetoric, in patriotism, and in an accommodationist approach to race relations informed a great deal of African American commemorative activity. Indeed, in many ways, Washington became America's ultimate proponent of reconciliationist Civil War memory. In his most celebrated oration, delivered at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta on September 18, 1895, Washington had virtually the entire nation as his stage. Remarkably, on the very same day that a black Southerner would

leap into fame with a speech to white people in Atlanta, the massive Blue-Gray reunion was under way some 150 miles north at the Chickamauga battlefield (see Chapter 6).⁴⁵ An elixir of reunion and race filled the commemorative and festive air along the axis from Chattanooga to Atlanta that September.

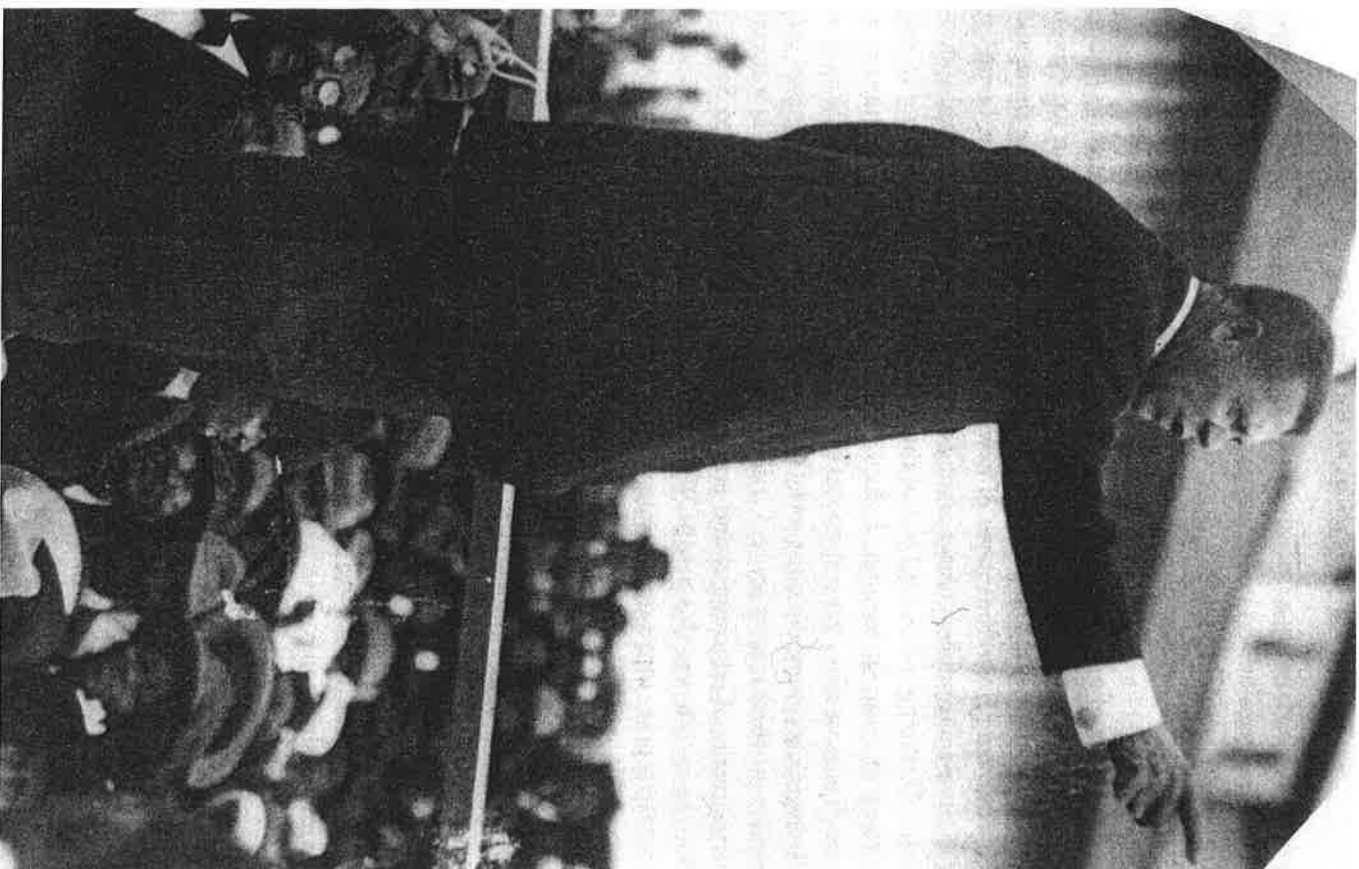
In this era of massive expositions and world's fairs, it was Atlanta's turn to represent the South and to try to match the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 in grandeur. The president of Tuskegee Institute stole the show, and his fame rang from front pages of newspapers across the country. Invited as the representative black orator among a series of speakers in a packed auditorium, Washington delivered one of the most important addresses in the long history of national reunion. Indeed, Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" speech is most often remembered as the signature statement in the Wizard of Tuskegee's accommodationist social philosophy—by his critics as a racial surrender to white supremacy and inequality, and by his defenders as a necessary strategy of educational and economic uplift in the segregated South.⁴⁶ But the speech was also part of Washington's long effort to merge sectional and racial peace into a single cause of black progress. Thirty years after Appomattox, he took the stage on a sweltering evening in Atlanta, looked out upon a huge racially mixed audience of former slaves, Confederate veterans, and their descendants, and gave all those who wished it a license to forget the war, to agree on the mistakes of Reconstruction, and to put the South's vexing race problem on a course of permanent settlement. Washington had a prescription for nearly everyone's still ailing memory of the Civil War.

A black man addressing whites in such a setting was a rare event in the South. Washington rode in a three-hour parade of carriages, which included companies of white and black militia troops. Blacks were relegated largely to the rear of the procession, and in the great hall where the opening ceremonies took place, they were cordoned off in a Negro section. Just as it became Washington's time to speak, a band played the "Star Spangled Banner" and the "audience cheered"; then the band played "Dixie," and the throng "roared with shrill hi-yis." Washington broke the tension by celebrating the Exposition as the means to "do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom." Washington spoke as a native and proud Southerner dropping his ideological tie into the well of resentment over Reconstruction. "Ignorant and inexperienced,"

the freedmen had started wrongly at the "top instead of at the bottom" of life. They had foolishly pursued political office and voting rights rather than "real estate or industrial skill." Then the skilled orator offered the promise of black labor to the South's future, and gave the speech its famous refrain. "Cast down your bucket where you are," Washington proclaimed to blacks many times over, weaving it through a metaphor of a lost ship at sea encountering a friendly vessel. Washington delivered a set of promises and bargains; blacks would forget their "grievances" and embrace their "opportunities." They would "live by the productions of our hands" and prosper by the maxim that "there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem."⁴⁷

Washington then drew whites intimately into the metaphor, asking them to fulfill the bargain of racial peace by casting down their buckets as well among the very work force that had cleared the South's forests and built its cities, the "patient . . . unresentful people" who did not, like foreign workers, engage in "strikes and labor wars." Thrusting his hand in the air, Washington offered another soon-to-be-famous deal: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." White and black Southerners would march to economic growth and out of depression together. Washington asked whites to "remember the path" blacks had traversed since starting out in 1865 with only "a few quilts and pumpkins and chickens (gathered from miscellaneous sources)." He maintained that both races were bending over the same "altar" of remembrance, "both starting practically empty-handed three decades ago." In millennial tones, Washington ended with an appeal for the "blotting out of sectional differences and racial animosities," and for faith that "our beloved South" would soon know a "new heaven and a new earth."⁴⁸ White women threw flowers and blacks wept in the aisles as the white dignitaries on the stage swarmed gleefully about the orator. The reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory had a new voice and a new bargain, rooted in the strange but beguiling dream that economic progress would render remembering unnecessary. As the late day sun flashed horizontally through the auditorium windows, the crowd cheered in delirium and the Civil War and Reconstruction seemed truly over.

Viewed overnight as spokesman of his race, Washington was now heralded by whites, and some blacks, as the "Moses" of his people. As hats were thrown in the air and "the fairest women of Georgia stood up and cheered" the black man, wrote the *New York World's* correspondent, James Creelman, "it was as if the orator had bewitched them." Perhaps he had. The opening



Booker T. Washington was a major spokesman for a reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory, which he hoped would enable black Southerners to achieve racial peace and economic progress. (Tuskegee University Archives, Tuskegee, Alabama)

ceremonies had been the "most hopeful day in the history of the negro race," said Washington the next day in self-congratulation, "the day for which Garrison and Douglass and Grady [Henry] worked and prayed." Folding the two great abolitionists into the same breath with the New South's famous promoter, announcing that the "year of jubilee of the negro" had arrived in the place where "Sherman and Hood fought," Washington demonstrated his keen determination to serve as the South's and the nation's reconciler.⁴⁹ The elements of the deal made a much weaker combination than Washington would ever admit; his dreamy coalition of Northern financiers, white Southern conservative segregationists, and masses of Southern blacks had no chance of wresting from American society a new racial and economic utopia.

Yet for many months and from diverse quarters, Washington's prescriptions seemed to embody sweet reason and excited many supporters. Indeed, many black admirers responded to the possibilities in the speech, not to its dangers; they were inspired by the message of *success* implied by Washington's performance before a white audience. The Reverend Frances J. Grimké wrote of the "great satisfaction" the race felt that Washington held center stage at "so important an occasion." The free-lance journalist and self-styled black nationalist John Edward Bruce admired Washington's ability to "strike the happy mean" at Atlanta. "You hold the key to the solution of the problem of the century," Bruce assured Washington. "The Negro" must make "himself intellectually, morally, and industrially the equal of the white man." And from New York, one of Washington's protégés, T. Thomas Fortune, informed his leader: "It looks as if you are our Douglass and I am glad of it." Since Douglass had died earlier the same year, these responses may reflect a yearning for national leadership among black Americans. But it also implied that the deeper meanings of Washington's prescriptions had not yet become the primary subject of debate; fame, and the possibilities of a new day in race relations, seemed to drive the hopes of many blacks. Indeed, William Casler, a black teacher from Knoxville, Tennessee, was so inspired that he suggested to Washington that his expression, "separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to human progress," be inscribed on a lapel button, "as worn by Grand Army men" and "sold on Exposition grounds at the Negro exhibit."⁵⁰ In such genuine enthusiasm, the marketing of memory and hope knew no bounds.

Many Atlanta blacks boycotted the Exposition because of the segregation practiced in the city. To the wider public, however, the Negro building was

the great curiosity of the fair. An impressive structure, 276 feet long and 112 feet wide, it had been built largely by black workmen. Over the main entrance decorated relief work represented past and present in the black experience. On one side a slave mammy appeared with a log cabin, rake, and basket in 1865; on the other side Frederick Douglass's face joined representations of a substantial house, a well-fed mule with plow, a stone church, and symbols of racial progress in science, art, and literature. After passing under this contrast of "old" and "new negro" symbolism, visitors could observe numerous exhibits of wares produced in the various black colleges and secondary schools, as well as many works of art, including three paintings by Henry Ossawa Tanner and Edmonia Lewis's bust of Charles Sumner.⁵¹ The Tuskegee and Hampton institutes assembled the largest displays of the "industrial work."

Perhaps the most unusual exhibit in the Negro building was one assembled by Henry McNeal Turner, who had recently returned from a trip to West Africa. Labeled "Uncivilized Africa," Turner's collection of swords, knives, and spears, oils, cloth, and bird specimens were meant to depict the undeveloped life of the "heathen," as the press and even Turner himself referred to West Africans. On a stroll with a newspaper reporter, Turner objected to all the talk about the exhibits representing the "new Negro." "There is nothing new in all this fine work," insisted the bishop. "The negroes always did the finest kind of work in the South." Always available for a good quote, Turner next turned his contrarianism on the "Dahomey Village," located on the midway of the exposition. Insulted by the white huckster outside the show urging visitors to see the "wild cannibals" of Africa, Turner confronted the man. With a crowd nearby cheering him on, Turner dressed down the carnival employee with a speech about white ignorance of Africa, ending with the exhortation for all to hear: "Stop your lying about the negro!"⁵²

It takes nothing away from Booker Washington's leadership skills to note that his fame in the aftermath of Atlanta in 1895 was very much the creation of whites. He had been chosen to speak largely by the whites who organized the exposition because they judged him "safe." Racial tensions in the South of the mid-1890s, after several years of lynching, turmoil over Populist politics, and a deepening economic panic, were as potentially explosive as they had ever been. One white Northerner attending the Atlanta speech observed that as the platform guests arrived an hour late in the hot auditorium, many whites angrily shouted, "what's that nigger doing on the stage?"⁵³ Professor

Washington won over a hostile white audience, but one that, by and large, wanted to believe in racial peace, as long as it blossomed in a firmly segregated society, with blacks knowing their place as efficient but politically inactive laborers. Washington delivered the tonic that seemed to awaken hope on many fronts, North and South, among whites and many blacks. Atlanta dearly wanted Yankee investments; the spokesman of the black race who had built the tradition of industrial schools performed as broker of the deal, pacifier of the past and prophet of the new day.

What Page's loyal slave narrators had not yet accomplished for the Northern mind, Washington helped to complete. John Cochran, a Union veteran and lawyer practicing in New York, wrote to Washington of his complete wish fulfillment after reading the Atlanta speech. "Bless God, the 'day of Jubilee' am come. As a white man and old time abolitionist and ex Union Veteran I bless God . . . for the great speech which He told you to make." Cochran seemed to see now the true end of the war. "The old gulf is bridged—the ax is buried forever," he said, "not to be unburied on Election Day!" The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* heralded Washington's performance at Atlanta as the advent of the "new negro." But most important was the "amazement" with which the white audience responded; the real story, said the Chicago reporter, was the "awakening of the white race . . . to the possibilities of the colored people."⁵⁴ Everyone saw what they most wanted to see. But all was not hopeful among Washington's own race in the aftermath of his famous speech.

While some black newspapers fell in line behind the strategy of economic racial advancement and Bookerite reconciliation, many protested. In his *Voice of Missions*, Henry McNeal Turner complained that Washington "will have to live a long time to undo the harm he has done our race." Another writer in the same paper, George N. Smith, thought the labeling of Washington as the next Douglass "as unseemly as comparing a pigmy to a giant—a mountain brook leaping over a boulder, to a great, only Niagara." And the *Atlanta Advocate* lampooned Washington as "Prof. B. T. or Bad Taste Wash," who was "so representative of the Negro that his hat flies off, the moment a red headed white newsboy is introduced to him." In Washington, D.C., the Bethel Literary and Historical Association, an organization of intellectuals and artists that met frequently to deliver formal papers, held its October 1895 meeting as a discussion of the Atlanta address. Some at the meeting spoke in defense of Washington's accommodationism, but many others who vehemently opposed it dominated the debate. Francis Grimké reported carefully

to Washington that "there were a few who thought you were playing into the hands of the Southern Whites." As the turn of the century approached, and as the Lost Cause gained considerable sway over the American historical imagination, blacks and whites alike had to position themselves in relation to Booker Washington's brand of reconciliation on Southern terms. It combined a black Southerner's appeal for national reunion, a faith in markets, a doctrine of patience and self-reliance, an acquiescence in Jim Crow social legislation, and the Wizard's persistent belief that "progress is a law of God and progress is going to be the negro's eternal guiding star in this fair land."⁵⁵

Bookerite reconciliation was a complex mixture of purposeful forgetting, a theory of "race-development" (blacks were only in an early stage), devotion to industrial education, and sincere appeals for interracial cooperation. Washington tailored his appeals to memory to particular audiences. At the annual conference of the AME Church in May 1900, he portrayed the past as "broken-hearted," a "storm" out of which the nation would "reap the whirlwind." But quickly, Washington stressed that "our [blacks'] duty is to face the present and not to wall over the past" in "useless debate" over who was "responsible . . . for slavery." No one could fully disagree with the famous orator when he offered such direct prescriptions as "Our knowledge must be harnessed to the things of real life."⁵⁶ With such inspirations and bromides, Washington served up a hopeful vision of sectional and racial reunion.

At the Birmingham, Alabama, Lyceum in March 1899, Washington, as expected, stressed the "bond of sympathy" across the South between ex-slaves and former masters. Then, with a combination of dialect stories and a recital of the accomplishments of Tuskegee Institute in industrial education, he won over the audience of 250 potentially hostile whites. Moreover, that same month in Boston, he recited his version of the history of emancipation. "Faithful slaves" who had been the "bulwark" of plantations awaited the defeated white Southerner when he returned from the war. And with time white Southerners had come to realize how dependent they were on black labor and skill. "Debs" (between whites and blacks) had accumulated "in every direction" since Reconstruction. Slavery had been "almost as much permanent injury" to whites as to blacks, Washington contended. "The wrong to the Negro is but temporary, but upon those committing the crimes the results are eternal." The Negro "can afford to be wronged," he assured the New Englanders, but whites "cannot afford to wrong him" without their "proudest and bluest blood . . . being degraded."⁵⁷ In these expressions before white audiences, Washington did not talk of "debs" incurred by two generations of

sharecroppers or about what the nation might owe the victims of waves of lynchings (at least not yet). His was a moral reconciliation that he hoped to convert into material change. But at the center of America's dilemma with the memory of the war and its aftermath was the tragic fact that racial reconciliation could never be based solely on the powerless morality that Washington preached in his call for a reunion of ex-slaves and ex-masters around mutual economic need.

Washington carried such a message through to his last days: material progress by blacks would foment white admiration and, therefore, lead to the truest form of national and racial reconciliation. In a tribute to Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York, in June 1914, where the former liberator of fugitive slaves had recently died, Washington linked past and present in his peculiar way. Tubman was best remembered, he declared, as a symbol of the "law-abiding Negro," a leader who "brought the two races nearer together and made it possible for the white race to know the black race." By reciting the acreage of land ownership and the numbers of houses, grocery stores, dry goods stores, shoe stores, drug stores, and banks owned by blacks fifty years after freedom, Washington found the best evidence that "the work of Harriet Tubman was not in vain." Tubman had long been a malleable icon of America's antislavery past. But Washington's appropriation of this revolutionary activist who broke many laws to liberate slaves, in order to create a narrative of "racial friendship," showed less the measure of "progress" than the bankruptcy of Bookerite reconciliation.⁵⁸

Measuring racial progress, however, became a major preoccupation in black America around the turn of the century. Numerous thick books appeared that included the statistical advancement by blacks in literacy, property ownership, and many other categories; biographical sketches of scores of prominent men and women; the successful growth of schools, colleges, churches, and businesses; and short histories of black participation in wars and other national affairs. These compilations were often informed by a Bookerite agenda of uplift and accommodationism, as well as by a general desire for pride and respectability. Laced with photographs of professors, ministers, journalists, orators, and writers, including women who led the club movement and created institutions of social uplift, such books as H. F. Klerzing and W. H. Crogman, *Progress of a Race; or, The Remarkable Advancement of the Afro-American* (1897), G. F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress among Colored People* (1900), and J. L. Nichols and W. H. Crogman, *Progress of a Race* (1920) were inspired by an unflappable faith that demonstrating blacks'

improved condition in the industrial age would conquer white racism, unify blacks, and provide the only sure path to reconciliation. "Race prejudice is bound to give way before the potent influences of character, education, and wealth," Klerzing and Crogman confidently assumed. According to Richings, black artists and educational leaders of all sorts were representing "the race in educating the white people up to a better knowledge of what the race can do."⁵⁹

The purpose of these works seemed to be to cheer the race on to higher aspirations, to emotionally empower the young; they were encyclopedic pep talks within the black community of memory. To read these volumes is to enter huge storehouses of uplift ideology; as though encountering thousands of anecdotes from Booker T. Washington speeches without a narrative line. In schools, in families, and among black youth, these books provided much needed reminders of black success, repositories of seemingly self-made achievement. By an almost endless array of measures, each book attempted to show how far black folk had come since, and in spite of, slavery. Some were even forthright in addressing the history and agony of slavery; they included pictures and stories of ex-slaves against which progress could be judged. In the age of Jim Crow, all these measures of group capacity were of no small importance to a people for whom it was never fully safe to remember or forget.

Although Washington controlled some of these publications on racial advancement, "progress of the race" rhetoric had been a main theme in African American newspapers and schools for decades. An inherent part of the education at a college like Hampton Institute was the persistent effort to measure black progress. By the 1890s it was a custom to gather the year's graduates for a day-long symposium during commencement week to "discuss . . . the position of the Negro in the South today; to note improvement . . . as well as any retrogression." All manner of material, social, and occupational measures were considered at each year's assessment, and always in the background was remembrance of slavery as the starting line. To become a young educated black man or woman in the late nineteenth century was to enter a society where your own intellectual capacities were always under suspicious measurement in the white world and under a nearly constant self-scrutiny and tabulation in the segregated black world. At the heart of uplift ideology was a drumbeat about moral improvement as equal to, if not greater than, intellectual endeavor. It may be fine, argued Frances E. W. Harper, to train young blacks to "be brilliant and witty; eager, keen, and alert for the main chance,"

but the most important "factor in human progress" was to educate the young as "moral athlete[s]." Harper counseled the "spirit of self-surrender" as the guiding principle of black education and progress.⁶⁰

African American newspapers became repositories for both celebrations of black progress and intense debate about the obstacles of Jim Crow and violence. For every naysayer among blacks who decried the lack of economic and social progress, there were more eager to defend the race. When the lawyer T. McCants Stewart criticized blacks for their lack of independent achievement in 1897, a Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, minister, H. C. C. Astwood, answered that "race men" had succeeded in every profession outside of politics. "The progress made by the American Negro since reconstruction," said Astwood, "is the most remarkable and marvelous shown by any race in history." Many blacks made it their passion to collect the "facts and figures" of black achievement and publish such numbers well before "progress of the race" books were published. In 1889-90, John G. Jones of Philadelphia worked for eighteen months tabulating the wealth in real and personal property holdings by blacks in every state and territory, concluding with a total of \$263,000,000. Jones intended his findings as an answer to all those who suggested that blacks were dying out, or that they would be better off emigrating to Africa. He converted his progressive statistics into a declaration of belonging: "We are American citizens by birth, and here is where we propose to live and die." Moreover, many black ministers asserted the race's achievements, but did so as part of an embittered response to the heightened racism and obsessive talk of the "Negro question." "The progress of the Negro is creating such an excitement," wrote N. H. Jefferson in 1887, "that obstructions and hindrances are thrust across his pathway by his brother in white to impede him." And in 1889 the Reverend L. J. Coppin declared it "almost miraculous how well they [blacks] have done in so short a time," but in his travels in the South he found "an iron-handed opposition to the negro's elevation . . . the lines between the races never so closely drawn."⁶¹

ON THE UNDERSIDE of "progress of the race" rhetoric festered anger and great disappointment at the declining state of race relations in America as the nation reconciled. In 1888 a black New Jersey minister, William Yeocum, lamented that whites just did not comprehend how steadfastly blacks had earned their "citizenship." No Americans had greater reverence for public schools, said Yeocum, and if whites would open their minds to black prog-

ress, they would see that African Americans did not engage in such acts as the "Haymarket massacre in Chicago" and that "the colored American citizen does not go on the strike" or "carry his point with deadly dynamite." Although sometimes shot down and hanged without judge or jury, concluded Yeocum, "there are no Anarchists and Communists found among the colored people." These appeals did not fall completely on deaf ears in the New South era, as some urban white business and civic elites began to organize to control or improve race relations within the segregation regime. As one historian of lynching has said, the "tensions between progress and tradition" were especially acute in the South's struggle to modernize, eventually forcing many respectable whites to try to "strip away much of the legitimacy of lynching." But increasingly, deep frustration mixed with progress rhetoric among black spokesmen. The AME minister and future bishop Reverdy Ransom stressed that blacks were "loyal to the American flag and . . . imbued with the spirit of American institutions," but were, nevertheless, "practically shut out from many trades and useful callings . . . entirely upon color." Too much progress rhetoric rang hollow to Ransom. "Although we have had emancipation proclamations, constitutional amendments, civil rights bills, and that hot-bed of oppression now popularly called the 'new South,' the colored race in America has never yet been accorded a full and equal chance in the race of life."⁶²

As lynching and lawlessness against blacks increased in the 1890s, discussions of progress had to share space with outrage over violence. In 1893, a black Georgian, J. M. Lee, complained that news of a lynching had become virtually a weekly occurrence in his state. In response to preachers' appeals to scripture and the law as a means of dealing with mob terror, Lee said "the Negro . . . must fight for his rights. Nothing shorter than a Winchester or a gatling gun will stop this lynching." Ida B. Wells, a journalist and crusader against lynching, drew her extraordinary passion from personal experience and a sense of unbounded grievance. The aim in much of her anti-lynching writing was not only exposure, but also to deliver a compelling critique of America's self-definition as a land of liberty and progress. In *A Red Record* (1895), a catalogue of lynching horrors and appeals for activism, Wells urged the "Negro . . . to speak for himself" about lynching. And in so doing, Americans would have to swallow hard their sense of innocence. "With regret," charged Wells, blacks

must disclose to the world that degree of dehumanizing brutality which fixes upon America the blot of a national crime. Whatsoever

faults and failings other nations may have in their dealings with their own subjects or with other people, no other civilized nation stands condemned before the world with a series of crimes so peculiarly national. It becomes a painful duty of the Negro to reproduce a record which shows that a large portion of the American people avow anarchy, condone murder and defy the contempt of civilization.⁶³

With every exposure of a fabricated rape charge as the basis for a lynching, Wells exploded the doctrine of progress and tried to disturb the calm in the culture of national reconciliation.

In *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition* (1893), a widely distributed pamphlet, Wells compiled a stinging and ironic treatise on both black achievement and outrage. Among chapters by Frederick Douglass on the legacies of slavery; her own discussion of gruesome lynching details, and a concluding piece by her future husband, Ferdinand L. Barnett, documenting the many attempts black women had made to gain access to planning the exposition, Wells placed an essay on race progress by I. Garland Penn, soon to be the chief black organizer at the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition. Penn recorded the wealth held by blacks, state by state, the numbers of schools and churches; blacks in the various professions; and some seventy-five patents for inventions issued to African Americans. Juxtaposing measured black achievement with extremely graphic accounts of lynchings, Wells demonstrated the unsettled and anguished place of "progress of the race" discourse in African American life by the turn of the century. Wells insisted that the quantifiable material and professional success of blacks coexist in the same story with images of black men's bodies hanging from lampposts, riddled with bullets, burned on woodpiles, or dragged through city streets chased by fiendish relic hunters.⁶⁴ American memory, she hoped, could be forced to digest both sets of images. One of the burdens of black memory was that progress and horror had to occupy the same narrative.

On Emancipation Day, January 1, 1909, in Augusta, Georgia, a black Baptist minister, Silas X. Floyd, delivered the speech "Abraham Lincoln: Sent of God" at a large celebration sponsored by churches, fraternal orders, and the local Lincoln League. Floyd was young, charismatic, and a prolific writer of, among other works, a black history for children. He admonished those blacks who wished to forget that "our race was once enslaved in this coun-

try." "Did you ever see . . . a Confederate veteran who desired to forget that he once wore the gray," asked Floyd, "or who was unwilling to teach his children that he once proudly marched in battle behind Lee and Gordon, Jackson and Johnston? Did you ever see a Union soldier who was ashamed of the part which he took in the Great War, or who felt humiliated to tell his children about it?" Floyd reminded his people that they too had a great story to tell and preserve:

And don't you remember that, when the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses were on the march from Egypt . . . to Caanan . . . don't you remember that, after they had safely crossed the Red Sea, the Lord commanded them to set up memorial stones by which the event should be remembered? And yet some old Negroes wish to forget all about slavery—all about the past—and stoutly maintain that we have no right to be celebrating this day that brought freedom to our race . . . may God forget my people when they forget this day.

Floyd's speech reflects many dilemmas that Southern blacks faced. The youthful minister represented the postfreedom generation challenging the slavery generation. Just who should determine how and if the narrative of remembrance is written in any culture is always a generational conflict. Floyd raised some of the central questions confronting blacks as they contemplated their past in America: the meaning of more than two centuries of slavery, and the meaning of emancipation in the Civil War. How to look back, and then forward, with pride and confidence? How to tell the tale that they too had marched with Grant, stormed Fort Wagner, and lurched toward freedom through fear and hardship? Indeed, how to understand and declare their history in the Jim Crow South? When the children of Israel assembled their memorial stones, they too were obedient and reluctant in the face of God's commands, inspired and frightened by their faith, their heroism, and their history.⁶⁵

74. Mosby to Dr. A. Monteiro, February 19, 1895, San Francisco, Mosby to Judge Rueben Page, June 11, 1902, Akron, Colo., John C. Ropes to Mosby, February 16, 1896, Boston, Mosby to Lunsford L. Lomax, February 19, 1896, San Francisco, Mosby to Marcus J. Wright, February 22, 1896, San Francisco, Mosby to John C. Ropes, December 13, 1897; Warrenton, Va., in Adele H. Mitchell, ed., *The Letters of John S. Mosby* (Charlottesville: Stuart-Mosby Historical Society, 1986), 75, 83-90, 111-113; Mosby to Sam Chapman, January 21, February 15, 1910, GLC, MI; Mosby to Bradley T. Johnson, December 20, 1897, Bradley T. Johnson Papers, PL, DU.
75. Mosby to Dr. A. Monteiro, June 9, 1894, San Francisco, Mosby to Judge Rueben Page, June 11, 1902, in Mitchell, ed., *Letters of John S. Mosby*, 69, 97; Mosby to (illegible), June 22, 1894, Mosby Scrapbooks 1, University of Virginia Library; George L. Christian, "Report of the UCV History Committee," 1907, MOC.
76. Mosby to Sam Chapman, June 4, 1907, February 15, 1910, Washington, D.C., GLC, MI.
9. *Black Memory and Progress of the Race*
1. *Washington Bee*, January 6, 1883; Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, 219-221.
 2. *People's Advocate* (Washington, D.C.), January 6, 1883, clipping in Leon Gardner Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia; *Washington Bee*, January 6, 1883; Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," March 4, 1861, in Basler, ed., *Collected Works*, vol. 4, 271.
 3. *Washington Bee*, January 6, 1883.
 4. *New York Globe*, January 6, 1883.
 5. *Washington Bee*, January 6, 1883. I draw the term "felt history" from Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (1961; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 4. Warren writes: "The Civil War is our only felt history—history lived in the national imagination."
 6. On just what blacks faced in preserving their own sense of historical memory against the Lost Cause tradition, see Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), chs. 1-2.
 7. Ralph Ellison, "The World and the Jug," 1963, in Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), 124.
 8. *CR*, July 26, 1883; *New York Globe*, January 20, February 3, 24, June 9, 1883; *Washington Bee*, June 10, 1883; Degler, *The Other South*, 276-300.
 9. *New York Globe*, February 24, 1883.
 10. *Washington Bee*, April 21, 1883. The drill team averaged some 40 men per team. On cities, democratic civic culture, and parades, see Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
11. *Washington Bee*, April 21, 1883.
 12. *CR*, October 4, 1883. On the variety of state conventions, and especially the growing sentiment for political independence, see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), 26-41, 69-71. Richard T. Greener opposed the national convention, declaring in May: "Conventions!—there never was one that did not disgrace the race by wranglings. We need some common sense, not conventions." See *New York Globe*, May 12, 1883.
 13. Douglass, "Address to the People of the United States," Louisville, Ky., September 24, 1883, in Foner, ed., *Life and Writings*, vol. 4, 373-374, 377-380.
 14. *Ibid.*, 384.
 15. See speech by J. M. Gregory at the Douglass banquet, *Washington Bee*, January 13, 1883; "Civil Rights Laws," *New York Globe*, February 3, 1883. On the cases and Harlan's dissent, see Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro*, 114-118.
 16. Douglass, "Speech at the Civil Rights Mass Meeting," Lincoln Hall, Washington, D.C., October 22, 1883, in Foner, ed., *Life and Writings*, vol. 4, 393, 402; other papers quoted in *CR*, October 25, 1883. Also see Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, 221-222.
 17. *CR*, November 15, 1883.
 18. *Ibid.*, June 21, November 8, December 13, 1883.
 19. *Ibid.*, December 27, 1883; Joseph C. Price, "The Race Problem Stated," in Carter G. Woodson, ed., *Negro Orators and Their Orations*, (1925; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1969), 490. On Turner, see Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).
 20. *CR*, March 18, June 3, 24, 1865.
 21. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1880, June 14, 1883.
 22. *Ibid.*, March 17, 29, 1881. See also Ira Berlin, et al., eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*, 4 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982-94). But especially see the supplementary volume, Ira Berlin and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Families and Freedom: A Documentary History of African American Kinship in the Civil War Era* (New York: New Press, 1997).
 23. *CR*, July 13, 1890. On the often highly publicized reunions of former slaves with white families, see Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 189-190. On the planning of these events as "Ex-Slave Reunion Days," such as one in Tyler, Tex., in 1893, organized by blacks, see *CR*, August 4, 1893.
 24. Tourgée, "South as a Field for Fiction," 409-410; *CR*, April 25, 1878, September 29, 1887; Kelly Miller, "The Negro's Part in the Negro Problem," in *Race Adjustment: Essays on the Negro in America* (1908; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1968), 99.

25. Delia Garlic, interviewed in Montgomery, Ala., n.d., in Rawick, ed., *American Slave*, ser. 1, vol. 6 (Ala.), 129-132, and Jenny Proctor, interviewed in Tex., n.d., Rawick, ed., *American Slave*, ser. 1, vol. 5 (Tex.), 208-217, both in Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, eds., *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: New Press, 1998), 8-11, 30-31; Sarah Wooden Johnson, interviewed in Petersburg, Va., n.d., in Charles L. Perdue Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weenils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 163; Sarah Debro, interviewed in Durham, N.C., July 24, 1937, in Belinda Hummence, ed., *My Folks Don't Want Me to Talk about Slavery* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 1984), 61.
26. Richard Wright, *Twelve Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), 46-47.
27. "The Need of New Ideas and New Aims for a New Era," address to the graduating class of Storer College, Harpers Ferry, W.Va., May 30, 1885, in Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses* (1891; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1969), iii, 13-15. The speech was originally published in the *AME Review* 2 (October 1885), 115-127. On Crummell see Wilson J. Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Its Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Alfred A. Moss, *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 19-34, 53-62. Crummell was the founder of the American Negro Academy, a group of black intellectuals that met occasionally in the 1890s and during the first decade of the new century to deliver formal papers. On the Crummell-Douglass encounter at Harpers Ferry, see Blight, "Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Re-membered?" in Blight and Brooks D. Simpson, eds., *Union and Emancipation: Essays on Politics and Race in the Civil War Era* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997), 160-166.
28. Crummell, "The Need of New Ideas and New Aims," 18.
29. Frederick Douglass, "Speech at the Thirty-Third Anniversary of the Jerry Rescue," 1884, Douglass Papers, LC, reel 16.
30. Frederick Douglass, "Thoughts and Recollections of the Antislavery Conflict," speech undated, but it is at least as late as the early 1880s; "Decoration Day," speech at Mr. Hope Cemetery, Rochester, N.Y., May 1883; and "Address Delivered on the 26th Anniversary of Abolition in the District of Columbia," April 16, 1888, Washington, D.C., all in Douglass Papers, LC, reel 15. On the role of white supremacy in the development of theories of black "degeneration," see Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South*, 103-196, 239-277, and on the permanence with which these ideas were held, Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 320-322.
31. See Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 226-228; William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Norton, 1991), 238-304; and Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, 189-245.
32. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "The Dying Bondman," *AME Review* 1 (July 1884), 45; Rev. James M. Henderson, "The Negro in America," *AME Review* 4 (April 1888), 384; Pauline E. Hopkins, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* (1900; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13. On black women and the question of respectability, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).
33. Crummell, "The Need of New Ideas and New Aims," 19, 13; Du Bois, *Souls*, 38; Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: New American Library, 1987), 273.
34. "Address to the Negro Society of Virginia," November 12, 1914, in Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (hereafter *BTW Papers*), 14 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972-1980), 13, 170; "Address before Brooklyn Institute of Science," February 2, 1903, *BTW Papers*, vol. 7, 88-89; "Religious Life of the Negro," *North American Review*, July 1905, and *Boston Globe*, October 4, 1904, *BTW Papers*, vol. 8, 333, 84.
35. *CR*, April 22, 1880; Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (1901; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8-10.
36. Henry McNeal Turner, *The Negro in All Ages: A Lecture Delivered in the Second Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, April 8, 1873* (Savannah, 1873), 29; *Nashville Christian Advocate*, October 8, 1888, in Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *Respect Black: The Writings and Speeches of Henry McNeal Turner* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 74-75. On Turner's attachment to the doctrine of Providence, his speech at Davis's funeral, and Lee's response, see *CR* January 2, 9, 1890, and Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 263-266. Discussion of slavery and the Confederacy as paradoxical or even as divine agents of black liberation was nothing new. Even William Still, in his massive history of the Underground Railroad in 1872, announced in his preface that "the slave auction block indirectly proved to be in some respects a very active agent in promoting travel on the UGRR, just as Jeff Davis was an agent in helping to bring about the downfall of Slavery." See William Still, *Underground Railroad* (1872; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1968), 2.
37. Turner, letter from Freetown, Sierra Leone, November 16, 1891, in Redkey, ed., *Respect Black*, III.

38. See Albert J. Raboteau, "Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Forth Her Hands": Black Destiny in Nineteenth Century America," in Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 42. On Ethiopianism, see Wilson J. Moses, "Assimilationist Black Nationalism, 1890-1925," in Moses, *The Wings of Ethiopia: Studies in African-American Life and Letters* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), 95-105, esp. 102-103; Wilson J. Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1978), 23-24, 156-157; and J. Mureto Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 1-3, 50-83. Raboteau considers Ethiopianism a deep tradition in black religious history and stresses the "obscure" character of the passage in Psalms 68:31 (and hence the multiple interpretations and uses it can inspire). Moses considers the tradition of Ethiopianism to be more political and religious than literary, and to have been influenced by the American tradition of Manifest Destiny. Through this outlook, he writes, blacks were given a sense of "destiny . . . to create an exemplary civilization, usually in Africa, but not only there" (102).
39. On black millennialism see Timothy E. Fulop, "'The Future Golden Day of the Race': Millennialism and Black Americans in the Nadir, 1877-1901," in Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau, eds., *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 227-253; and St. Claire Drake, *The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1970). For the varieties of black millennial outlooks and for the term "race histories," see Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Redeeming Southern Memory: The Negro Race History, 1874-1915," in Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *No Deed But Memory: Essays on History and Memory in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming, 2000), 227-258. See Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rubenford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (1954; rpt. New York: Collier, 1965). In both his prefaces (to the first and second editions), Logan reflects on just what to call this period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in American race relations. He coined the term "nadir," which has had considerable staying power. He said he was tempted to call it the "Dark Ages in Recent American History." He also quotes Henry Arthur Callis's phrase "a low, rugged plateau" and John Hope Franklin's suggestion of "the Long Dark Night" (9, 11). These terms suggest some of the reasons why millennial thought took hold among blacks at the end of the nineteenth century.
40. Peter Thomas Stanford, *The Tragedy of the Negro in America* (Boston: by the author, 1898), iii, 9. On Williams and the writing and reception of his *History of the Negro Race in America* (1882), see Franklin, *George Washington Williams, 100-133*. On the ways in which Williams infused his history with "moral mean-

- ing" and millennial expectation, and on Stanford and Blyden, see Maffly-Kipp, "Redeeming Southern Memory," 227-228, 233-234, 237-240; and Raboteau, "Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Forth Her Hands," 45-46, 49.
41. Edward W. Blyden, "The African Problem and the Method of Its Solution," *AME Review* 7 (October 1890), 213.
42. Maffly-Kipp, "Redeeming Southern Memory," 229, 242-243; J. Max Barber, *The Negro of the Earlier World: An Excursion into Ancient Negro History* (Philadelphia: The AME Book Concern, n.d.), 28; T. G. Steward, *The End of the World; or, Clearing the Way for the Fullness of the Gentiles* (Philadelphia: AME Church Book Rooms, 1888), 71; T. G. Steward, *The Colored Regulars in the United States Army* (1904; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1969), 12. Steward served as chaplain in a U.S. Army regiment during the Spanish-American War. In its aftermath he wrote a history of black participation in that war. On Steward, also see Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 468-469, 474.
43. James Theodore Holly, "The Divine Plan of Human Redemption, in Its Ethnological Development," *AME Review* 1 (October 1884), 79-85. On Steward and Holly, see Raboteau, "Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Forth Her Hands," 53-56; and Fulop, "The Future Golden Day of the Race," 239-242.
44. Alexander Crummell, "A Defense of the Negro Race in America from the Assaults and Charges," delivered at the Episcopal Church Congress, Richmond, Va., October 1882, in Crummell, *Africa and America*, 92; T. Thomas Fortune, *Black and White: Land, Labor, and Politics in the South* (1884; rpt. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1970), 86; *Voice of Missions*, March 1896.
45. See *Dedication of the Chickamanga and Chattanooga National Military Park, September 18-20, 1895*. In its long story on the Atlanta speech and ceremonies, the *New York World*, September 19, 1895, commented on the juxtaposition of the Blue-Gray reunion with the Exposition. The "hosts of soldiers . . . celebrating the struggle the fruits of which were exposed to the world in Atlanta . . . would have been astonished by the spectacle when Prof. Booker stepped to the front of the platform." See *BTW Papers* vol. 4, 3-4.
46. On the background for Washington's selection as orator, and the origins of the Exposition, see Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 204-211; and Ayers, *Promise of the New South, 322-323*.
47. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, 214-217; *New York World*, September 19, 1895, in *BTW Papers*, vol. 4, 3-8; "Atlanta Exposition Address," *BTW Papers*, vol. 3, 583-584.
48. "Atlanta Exposition Address," 585-587.
49. *New York World*, September 19, 20, 1895, in *BTW Papers*, vol. 4, 9, 15-17. See also Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, 229-236. Harlan has aptly called Washing-

- ton's prescription for reconciliation a "Faustian bargain." See Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation," in John Hope Franklin and August Meier, eds., *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 89.
50. Frances J. Grimké to Washington, September 24, 1895, Ben Bell Sr. to Washington, October 1, 1895; John Edward Bruce to Washington, October 14, 1895, William J. Casler to Washington, September 26, 1895; Timothy Thomas Fortune to Washington, September 26, 1895, all in *BTW Papers* vol. 4, 18-19, 24-26, 30-31, 46-47, 55-56.
51. *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 2, 1895, in *ibid.*, 37-42; *Voice of Missions*, November 1895.
52. *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 2, 1895, in *BTW Papers* vol. 4, 41-42.
53. W. J. McGee, in Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, 216.
54. John Webster Cochran to Washington, September 21, 1895, and *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 2, 1895, *BTW Papers*, vol. 4, 20, 34.
55. *Voice of Missions*, October, December 1895; *Washington Bee*, November 2, 1895; *Atlanta Advocate*, in *Cleveland Gazette*, November 2, 1895, quoted in Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, 226; Minute Book, Bethel Literary and Historical Association, October 22, 1895, Moorland-Springarn Collection, Howard University; Frances Grimké to Washington, November 7, 1895, *BTW Papers*, vol. 4, 74-75. The discussion at the October 22 meeting of the Bethel Association was led by L. M. Hershaw, a professor at Howard University. Other participants included Kelly Miller, Ida Gibbs, J. W. Cromwell, L. W. Pullies, Jesse Lawson, Frances Grimké, "and others." A stunning illustration of the difficulty Washington's approach faced came in the Montgomery, Ala., Race Conference in 1900. Washington attended this gathering controlled by white supremacists, but was not allowed to speak. Several speakers at the conference were radical racists, arguing that emancipation had been a mistake and favoring repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment. George A. Mebane, a black man and former Congressman from North Carolina, considered the Montgomery Conference an assembly of "the unreconciled, to revise and resuscitate the lost cause." See John David Smith, "No Negro is upon the program: Blacks and the Montgomery Race Conference of 1900," in Smith and Thomas H. Appleton Jr., eds., *A Mythic Land Apart: Re-assessing Southerners and Their History* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 125-150.
56. Booker T. Washington, "The Storm before the Calm," speech delivered before AME Conference, May 23, 1900, in *Colored American Magazine* 1 (September 1900), 200-204. This speech to the AME annual meeting was especially interesting because Washington, while still advocating that political agitation was unwise, delivered a forthright defense of the Fifteenth Amendment, which at that time was under consideration for repeal by some Southern state legislatures.

57. "Extracts from an Address before the Birmingham Lyceum," Birmingham, Ala., March 30, 1899, and "Extracts from an Address at the Hollis Street Theater," Boston, March 21, 1899, *BTW Papers*, vol. 5, 54-57, 62.
58. "Extracts from an Address at the Unveiling of the Harriet Tubman Memorial," Auburn, N.Y., June 12, 1914, *BTW Papers*, vol. 13, 58-61.
59. H. F. Klerzing and W. H. Crogman, *Progress of a Race: or, The Remarkable Advancement of the Afro-American* (1897), rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 616; G. F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress among Colored People* (1900; rpt. Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969), 422. The first 200 pages of J. L. Nichols and William H. Crogman, *Progress of a Race* (1920; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1969) is devoted to a history of African Americans from the slave trade to the women's club movement of the first two decades of the twentieth century.
60. *Southern Workman*, September 1895; *AME Review* 2 (July 1885).
61. *Voice of Missions*, October 1897; the Stewart piece appeared in the *New York Sun*, August 13, 1897. See also *CR*, July 10, 1890, August 18, 1887, September 22, 1887, January 3, 1889.
62. *CR*, August 9, June 28, 1888; Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 210-211.
63. *CR*, May 25, 1893; *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892-1893-1894* (1895), in Trudier Harris, comp., *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 138, 149.
64. *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, in *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett*, 46-137. Wells had 20,000 copies of this pamphlet printed and distributed. She married Barnett, a Chicago lawyer, in 1895.
65. *AC*, January 2, 1909.
10. *Fifty Years of Freedom and Reunion*
1. *Boston Evening Transcript*, June 1, 1897. On the formation of the Fifty-fourth and the battle of Fort Wagner, see Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment: History of the Fifty-Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Boston: Boston Book Company, 1894), 68-85; Peter Burchard, *One Gallant Rush: Robert Gould Shaw and His Brave Black Regiment* (New York: St. Martin's, 1965); and Glarthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 136-142. On the development of the monument, see Stephen J. Whitfield, "'Sacred in History and in Art': The Shaw Memorial," *New England Quarterly* 60 (March 1987), 3-27; Sidney Kaplan, "The Sculptural World of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," *Massachusetts Review* 30 (Spring 1989), 17-36; Lois Goldreich Marcus, "The Shaw Memorial by Augustus Saint-Gaudens: A History Painting in Bronze," *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of*