

Reading Guide for The 1857 Project Essays

“Looking back: Legacy of slavery limited opportunities at *Post-Dispatch* and beyond” by Linda Lockhart, pgs 62-64

Excerpt	<p>“More than 40 years ago, the American Society of News Editors challenged the news industry to achieve racial parity by the year 2000. Since 1978, an annual survey has shown “that while there has been progress, the racial diversity of newsrooms does not come close to the fast-growing diversity in the U.S. population as a whole,” the organization reported. In September 2018, ASNE found that people of color represented 23 percent of the workforce in U.S. newsrooms that responded to the survey. While the percentage may appear encouraging, the society said the number of newsrooms responding to the survey hit a historic low, with a response rate of about 17 percent, or 293 newsrooms of the 1,700 queried for the survey submitted information. This rate of 23 percent should not be generalized to interpret the landscape of the U.S. journalism industry as a whole, the society noted, because the responses were not drawn from a random sample. The survey has historically relied on a convenience sample from organizations that volunteer to participate. But what happens in newsrooms where there is little or no diversity? Where is the diversity of thought and news judgment when considering what stories to tell and how to best tell them?... Pondering today the legacy of slavery in the United States on the news industry is to consider equally the same legacy on the education of African American children who are undereducated and mis-educated by teachers who continue to pre-judge their abilities. And on the injustice system that perpetuates the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately leads African American youth and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to become incarcerated. That legacy is that all of us continue losing out by limiting opportunities for significant portions of our population. It is a loss not only for African Americans. It is a loss for all of humanity.”</p>
Key Names, Dates, and Terms	Surname, Ancestors, Immigrants, Census data, Anti-literacy laws, African diaspora, Phillis Wheatley, Ida B. Wells Barnett
Supplemental Texts	<p>“Ida B. Wells won the Pulitzer. Here’s why that matters.” by Sarah L. Silkey in the <i>Washington Post</i></p> <p>Images:</p>

"Lola"

Article by "lola" that appeared in the New York Freeman on January 15, 1887



"Lola" on Discrimination.
 From the American Baptist.
 We howl about the discrimination exercised by other races, unmindful that we are guilty of the same thing. The spirit that keeps Negroes out of the colleges and places him by himself, is the same that drives him in the smoking car; the spirit that makes colored men run excursions with "a separate car for our white friends," etc., provides separate seats for them when they visit our concerts, exhibitions, etc., is the same that sends the Negro to theatres and church galleries and second class waiting rooms; the feeling that prompts colored barbers, hotel keepers and the like to refuse accommodation to their own color is the momentum that sends a Negro right about when he presents himself at any similar first-class establishment run by white men; the shortsightedness that insists on separate Knights of Labor Assemblies for colored men, is the same power that forces them into separate Masonic and Odd Fellow lodges. Consciously and unconsciously we do as much to widen the breach already existing and to keep prejudice alive as the other race. There was not a separate school in the State of California until the colored people asked for it. To say we wish to be otherwise is a tacit acknowledgement of the inferiority that they take for granted anyway. The ignorant man who is so shortsighted has some excuse, but the man or men who deliberately yield or barter the birthright of the race for money, position, self-aggrandizement in any form, deserve and will receive the contumely of a race made wise by experience. Lola.
 Memphis, Tenn., Dec. 28, 1886.

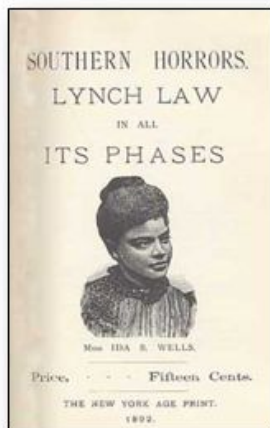
IDA B. WELLS (1862-1931)



Clay Street School for the "the colored of Memphis," 1873-1892

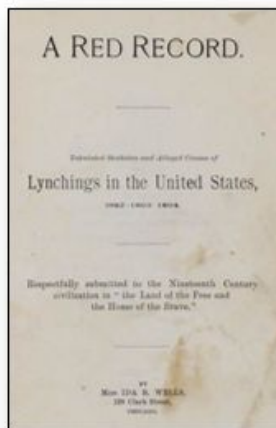
"I felt that some protest should be made over conditions in the colored schools. The article was a protest against the few and utterly inadequate buildings for colored children ...the poor teachers given us, whose mental and moral character was not of the best. It had been charged that some of these teachers had little to recommend them save an illicit friendship with members of the school board...some took walks and rides with friends of the other race."

On her article in Free Speech, 1891, *The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*



Published 1892

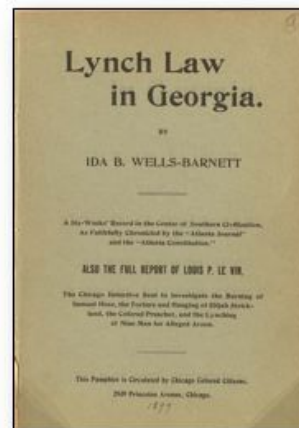
"The lesson this teaches...is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honour in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give. When the white man who is always the aggressor knows he runs as great a risk of biting the dust every time his Afro-American victim does, he will have greater respect for Afro-American life."



Published 1895

"ten thousand Negroes have been killed in cold blood, [through lynching] without the formality of judicial trial and legal execution."

"Nobody in this section of the country believes the old threadbare lie that black men rape white women."



Published 1899

"The real purpose of these savage demonstrations is to teach the Negro that in the South he has no rights the law will enforce... Samuel Hose was burned to teach the Negroes that no matter what a white man does to them, they must not resist...An example must be made. Ordinary punishment was deemed inadequate."

IDA B. WELLS
(1862-1931)



"There is only one thing left we can do; save our money and leave a town which will neither protect our lives and property, nor give us a fair trial in the courts, but take us out and murders is in cold blood when accused by white persons."

Wells, *Free Speech*, Aug. 1892



Picture of the bodies of Mozz, Stewart, and McDowell, from the Memphis Appeal-Avalanche, 10 March 1892.

A BLOODY RIOT.

Deputies Shot By Negroes.

A Horrible Affair at the Curve Late Last Night.

A Nest of Outlaws- Disturbed- and Shotguns Fired at Officers.

Three of Them Very Seriously Hurt By the Bullets.

Deputy Sheriffs Cole, Harold and Yarger the Suffering Victims.

Thirteen of the Black and Bloody-Handed Miscreants Arrested.

The Condition of Deputy Sheriff Cole Very Serious--The Others Will Recover-- A Large Lot of Weapons Captured. The Dive Long Known as a Disturbance Breeder--A Full Account of the Affair.

Excerpt from *The Memphis Appeal* following the attack on the People's Grocery 9 March 1892

Guiding Questions

- What are some legacies of slavery that impact the present experiences of African American families?
- Why do those descended from enslaved people have difficulty tracking their ancestral roots?

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How were anti-literacy laws used to control enslaved people?• Why are Black journalists significant to the field of journalism and to our society?• Why are diverse newsrooms important?• What connection does the legacy of slavery have with the news industry, the education system, and the criminal justice system in the U.S.? |
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