

The Great Migration Packet

Source: Excerpt from Booker T. Washington's 'Atlanta Compromise' speech, 1895

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1856 and was nine years old when slavery ended. He became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a school designed to teach blacks industrial skills. Washington was a skillful politician and speaker, and he won the support of whites in the North and South who donated money to the school. On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington spoke before a mostly white audience in Atlanta.

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our freedom we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more attractive than starting a dairy farm or garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days passed a friendly ship and sent out a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly ship at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed ship, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are" . . . The captain of the distressed vessel (ship), at last heeding (listening to) the injunction (order), cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water.

To those of my race I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"— cast it down in making friends with the Southern white man, who is your next-door neighbor. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service. . . . No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

To those of the white race who look to foreign immigrants for the prosperity of the South, I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes, whose fidelity (loyalty) and love you have tested. . . . As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past . . . so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach. . . . 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.

Historical Context	
Intended Audience	
Purpose	
Point of View	

Source: W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, 1903).

The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington came in 1903 when black leader and intellectual W.E.B. DuBois published an essay in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois rejected Washington's message and instead called for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of African-American youth. DuBois was born and raised a free man in Massachusetts and was the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard.

The most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the rise of Mr. Booker T. Washington. His leadership began at the time when Civil War memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons. Mr. Washington came at the psychological moment when whites were a little ashamed of having paid so much attention to Negroes [during Reconstruction], and were concentrating their energy on dollars. Mr. Washington practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races.

Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. He asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things—

First, political power; Second, insistence on civil rights; Third, higher education of Negro youth,

— and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the pacifying (calming down) of the South. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch (peace offering), what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement (taking away the right to vote) of the Negro;
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro;
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

Mr. Washington's doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical spectators (onlookers); when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we do not all work on righting these great wrongs.

Historical Context	
Intended Audience	
Purpose	
Point of View	

Document A: Newark Sales and Advertising Co., Official Guide and Manual of the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of Newark, New Jersey, Newark, NJ: 1916

In 1916, Newark celebrated the 250th anniversary of its founding. For the occasion, the Newark Sales and Advertising Company published 250,000 copies of the Official Guide and Manual of the Anniversary Celebration. The guide included various articles, pictures, and statistics about the city. Below are excerpts from it.

[Newark] has now most of the adornment of a great city. Its streets are well paved and well sewered. Its schools greatly enlarged and improved, are among the best. Its beautiful churches are sufficient to give attractive seats to all who would attend. Its superb water supply is not surpassed in quality. It has a public service in light and transportation that is unexcelled. Its public buildings are important and beautiful and if to some its debt may seem small for so great a city, it may be said with confidence that the projects now in sight may be relied upon to remove that cause for criticism. In the variety and extent of its industries it is among the first, and its enterprising salesmen make its wares known in every hamlet throughout the land.

Newark, thank fortune, is still more or less an old-fashioned city with old-fashioned ways. It has no idle rich. It looks askance at extravagant living. It sneers at ostentation. It goes to church – not as much as it should, but it remembers that it was founded by religious men for religious reasons. And it stands for the moralities in its private and public life. . . .

Newark has 252 distinct lines of industry; fifty lines each turning out values from one to thirty million dollars annually. Newark as a manufacturing center ranks ahead of thirty states in the aggregate value of its manufactured products. Newark per capita to its population leads in the variety of its manufactures....Wages paid employees average \$747 yearly.

1. When was this document written? What was its purpose?
2. How does this document describe Newark?

Document B: New York Times, October 22, 1917.

Great Ship Plant Needs Steel Men. Newark Yards Ready to Employ 12,000 Workers to Turn out Vessels for War Use. Will Build 200 Boats. War Committee Makes Appeal for Craftsmen – First Keel Plate Will Be Laid Dec. 1.

Steel workers are wanted badly by the United States Emergency Fleet Corporation in Newark, N.J., one of the great war plants that is rising magic-like out of the meadows along Newark Bay to supply the Government's need for cargo vessels as one means of successful prosecution of the war.

The United States Shipping Board and the Submarine Boat Corporation are co-operating to spread among the workers news of the great need for them to flock to the metropolitan district to take part in the task of turning out the standardized steel ships in such quantities that Germany's submarine war shall be balked.

A special War Committee, which is to aid the great ship plants to get the men needed, has issued posters picturing a steel vessel in process of construction on the ways, and proclaiming:

“If you can use tools you are wanted: your country needs ships and men to build them. Armies, ammunition and supplies are useless in this country without ships to transport them. Go to the nearest shipyard and offer your services. You can thus help to win the war and make the world safe for democracy.”

The Newark yards are to employ 12,000 men.

1. What major historical event was happening when this article was written? How might this historical context have shaped the content of the document?
2. What is the central problem described in this article? According to the article, how are businesses and government addressing the problem?

Document C: Helen B. Pendleton, “Cotton Pickers in Northern Counties,” Survey, February 1917.

Helen Pendleton was a white woman who worked for a charity in Georgia before becoming a supervisor for the Bureau of Charities in Newark. The passage below is from her article “Cotton Pickers in Northern Counties,” in which she described the challenges faced by African-American migrants in Newark. Survey magazine, a leading social work journal, published the article.

Early last spring, when a marked shortage of labor was felt, northern industries turned to the South and began to import Negroes by the thousand. Railroads and industrial plants furnished transportation and offered undreamed-of wages to the simple farm hands from the cotton fields of Georgia and Alabama. .

At first the railroad and other companies furnished the transportation, sending agents all through the South, who painted in glowing terms . . . the high wages and advantages of the North. But apparently that was not long necessary. The news spread like wildfire. . . . The Negroes sold their simple belongings, and, in some instances, valuable land and property, and flocked to the northern cities, even though they had no objective work in sight. And they are still coming. Enough money has been saved from their unprecedented wages to send for wives and children. Almost every day one may see in the Pennsylvania station groups of Negro women sitting patiently, surrounded by bundles and babies and shivering in cotton garments, waiting for night to come, which will bring the men to meet them. . . .

The industries of New Jersey went after these laborers because they needed them in their business. But, although the Negro is warmly welcomed as a laborer, it is increasingly apparent that as a Negro he is unwelcome. . . .

Soon after the migration began to be noticeable, suddenly, mysteriously, almost in a night, the signs To Let and For Rent in the part of the city where small houses and flats were available were changed to For Sale. . . . These humble newcomers, therefore, have been forced into finding lodgings in basements and in the worst parts of our city. . . .

1. According to Pendleton, why were African Americans migrating to Newark?
2. How do the reasons Pendleton provides for African American migration to Newark compare to the New York Times article?
3. How do Pendleton's descriptions of the conditions that African Americans faced when they arrived in Newark compare to the Newark Anniversary Guide's description of Newark?

Document D: Atlanta Constitution, "Penalties of Migration," December 14, 1916.

In the article below, an unidentified columnist describes the migration of African Americans. The article appeared in The Atlanta Constitution, which was one of the largest newspapers in Georgia at the time.

Notwithstanding there is some excuse, perhaps, for negro migration growing out of the fears which have been engendered by the actions of mobs, and the false stories of threats which emigration agents have fed them, the southern negro who is lured by their persuasion usually fares worse in the end, if he does not lose his life into the bargain.

It is a pitiful story that comes from Newark, N.J. . . . In a recent church meeting on the subject, reported in the Newark Evening News, Rev. O.M. Bonfield, pastor of a negro congregation is quoted as saying that

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Many of the newcomers are driven north by persecution in southern states as well as by the lure of high wages in the munitions factories. . . . These people in many instances need proper clothing to enable them to withstand the rigors of this climate; they need decent housing facilities. . . .

The northern idea of persecution in the south is, of course, a very exaggerated one; but we have to admit that in the work of the mob, at least, it has some foundation. It is a matter of common knowledge, however, that the honest and industrious negro gets along better and gets more out of life here in the south than he can anywhere else in the country. . . .

The emigrants, and it is stated there are some 12,000 of them in and around Newark alone, working chiefly in the munitions factories, are in actual need of housing and clothing, which, with all the promise of big wages, they have not been able to procure. Nor is that the whole story. Many of them are dying . . . due to the unhealthy surroundings in which they are compelled to live. . . .

1. When and where was this newspaper article published? How might this have influenced how the article described the migration of African Americans to Newark?
2. What does the article mean when it states that migration was caused, in part, by "the actions of mobs"?
3. According to this article, what were the consequences of the migration of African Americans to Newark? What evidence does it offer to support its claims?

Document E: Interview with Annie Rose Johnston, November 13, 1995.

In the 1990s, the Krueger-Scott Cultural Center of Newark conducted over 100 interviews with African Americans who migrated to Newark between 1910 and 1970. These oral histories focus on why people migrated to Newark and on their experiences once they arrived in the city. Below is an excerpt from an interview with Annie Rose Johnston.

Johnston: I was born in Bert County, Georgia. . . . It was a farm. We were 13 in all. . . . We came north in 1922. Daddy said he wanted his children to get more than he was able to get. He gave up farming and came up to Newark, my mother and dad. And she did domestic work and some seamstress work.

Interviewer: Why did they come to Newark? Better opportunities or what?

Johnston: Daddy thought he could get work easier in Newark. He didn't want to farm anymore.

Interviewer: Did your family know anybody in Newark? Or did you just take a chance? Did you have any relatives here?

Johnston: . . . No relatives. We were on our own. . . . It was a tough year. My mother was sick in one room with pneumonia. My brother was sick in the other room with pneumonia. And Daddy was a real brick, he stayed up night and day. He made sure they got their medicine. The lady down the hall had a phone, and he call my sister and tell her give them different medications.

1. What kind of document is this? When was it created?
2. How do Annie Rose Johnston's experiences compare to the experiences of migrants described by Rev. Bonfield in Document D?

Document	Evidence What are two pieces of evidence from this document that help to explain why African Americans migrated to Newark? (Cite specific details or passages from the documents).	Explanation How does each piece of evidence help to explain why African Americans migrated to Newark at the beginning of the 20th century?	Evaluating Evidence What is one reason why this might be a credible source for understanding why African Americans migrated to Newark? What is one reason why this document might not be credible?
A	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Credible: Not credible
B	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Credible: Not credible
C	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Credible: Not credible

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D	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Credible: Not credible
E	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Evidence #1: Evidence #2:	Credible: Not credible

1. Why did African Americans migrate to Newark at the beginning of the 20th century? Use evidence from at least three of the documents in your response. (10-15 Sentences)