From Buffalo Soldiers to Redlined Communities: African American Community Building in El Paso's Lincoln Park Neighborhood

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Introduction

In the 1800s, Chinese men worked in restaurants and laundries and lived in El Paso's First Ward. After the arrival of the railroads, in the 1880s, thousands of Mexicans lived alongside a sizable Black population. Historian Julian Lim writes, "For black, Chinese, and Mexican men and women, the El Paso-Juárez border held a similar attraction of time, offering multiple peripheries that exposed the limitations of segregation laws, exclusion policies, and capitalistic desires for a captive workforce."[1] All these groups were segregated to various neighborhoods.

This essay seeks to address how African Americans reconfigured the U.S.-Mexico borderlands to reflect their lived realities. Some questions this essay will respond to include the following: What were the consistencies between liminalities and borders for African Americans, and how were new identities forged? What did Black racialization look like within these spaces? What was the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers in the city of El Paso and its surrounding communities? What did identity creation look like within this space? What does it convey when we designate El Paso as part of the West? Another important critical component in this essay is how the African American community living in El Paso's East Side was displaced due to highway building. There is a lack of

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histories and stories of how African Americans along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands managed their identities, as well as how they maintained culture and traditions in places where they were regulated to specific spaces, neighborhoods, and barrios. Howard Campbell and Michael Williams have argued in their essay "Black Barrio on the Border: 'Blaxicans' of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico," that "there are also cultural borders within borderlands, not just across them."[2] They also state that in the borderlands, other groups such as Anglo-Americans, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans have overshadowed African Americans.[3]

The presence of African Americans in El Paso was established as early as the Civil War period, although "the number of blacks living in El Paso prior to the Civil War were miniscule—approximately 30."[4] Welborn J. Williams in "The Buffalo Soliders' Brush with 'Jim Crow' in El Paso" states that "immediately after the Civil War, two companies of the 125th United States Colored Troops had been stationed at Ft. Bliss."[5] Historian Quintard Taylor noted, "No group in black western history has been more revered or more reviled than the Buffalo Soldiers, the approximately 25,000 men who served in the U.S. Army's Ninth and Tenth Cavalries and Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Infantries between 1866 and 1917."[6] Williams states that members of the Twenty-Fifth were often sent to the frontier to ensure peace and stability and that their missions "were confined to stringing telegraph wire, escorting stagecoaches, building and repairing roads, and on occasion, fighting Indians."[7] In El Paso, Williams writes, "Black troops were the norm due to a more tolerant racial atmosphere there than in other parts of the state."[8]

The Lincoln Park community was one of those neighborhoods, one of the first mixed African American and Mexican American communities in Texas and in the Southwest.[9] It began as a village named Concordia or Stephenson's Concordia Ranch in the 1840s, just north of the Rio Grande. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, following the U.S.-Mexican War, it comprised part of the expanding United States. After the discovery of gold in California and continuing through the Civil War, Concordia became a respite for travelers and hosted a mercantile store for wagon trains heading West. In 1868, part of Concordia was leased to the U.S. Army and became Camp Concordia or the third Fort Bliss. Garrisons of Buffalo Soldiers were stationed there. After the arrival of the railroads in El Paso in 1881, the community provided a home for both African American and Mexican workers and their families.

In 1866, African Americans came to the attention of Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, the Chairman of the Senate Military Committee and a Radical Republican who opposed slavery. Wilson saw the potential of these African Americans as soldiers in the post-Civil War era. For African Americans in El Paso, Mexico then became an arena of unimagined possibilities or a liminal space where, in addition to race acceptance, the role of the military in peacekeeping in El Paso became another unimagined benefit of being Black in the borderlands. By 1877, African American infantry troops were well-established in the region and Blacks thrived in El Paso compared to other southern cit-

ies.[10] Williams argues that one of the reasons Blacks flourished in El Paso was because upon their arrival they had a community they could join. According to Charlotte Ivy, "These included the Bannecker Literary and Historical Society, which featured discussions and debates about timely topics; The Union Aid Society, designed to improve the welfare of the community; [the] Knight of Pythias Lodge; and a Negro Masonic Chapter."[11] In El Paso, Black troops were the norm due to a more tolerant racial atmosphere in the city than in other parts of the state.[12] The army base of Camp Concordia created in 1868 became home to many African Americans.

In the early 1890s, African American men also married Mexican women in both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. During this period, Mexican women were classified as white, and the enforcement of a Texas state law barring miscegenation challenged their marriages. In his book *Civil Rights in the Texas Borderlands: Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and Black Activism*, historian William Guzman details the "sentencing of Jasper Smith, an African American arrested for making an insulting proposal, against a white woman."[13] Guzman writes that in 1893, "Black men engaged in militant protest against enforcement of a Texas state law barring miscegenation, which would have complicated the lives of all those who had married women of Mexican descent."[14]

African Americans worked in numerous service occupations. Borderlands historian Will Guzman writes, "Not only did African Americans find work as barbers, laundresses, maids, janitors, school teachers, and mail carriers, but, as the town grew into an important transportation center, many Black families arrived as railroad employees [Figure 1]."[15] OK as set African Americans lived in both Segundo Barrio (Second Ward) and El Paso's Old East Side, including the Lincoln Park community.

Figure 1: Two unidentified Southern Pacific Railroad Sleeping Car Porters load food and beverages on a dining car in the 1940s. The El Paso Union Depot can be seen in the background. Photographer unknown. Photograph with permission of Roy Platner Personal Collection.

Arrival of the Railroads

The arrival of the railroads helped develop El Paso's local economy and turn it into a transportation and economic hub from the east to the west and, later, the south to the north. In addition to the Southern Pacific, other rail lines arrived in El Paso; they included the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe in June 1881, the Texas and Pacific Railway, also in 1881, and the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio rail line in 1883.[17] According to Alwyn Barr in his book *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995*, "[u]nder republic laws (1836–1845) free persons of one-eighth Negro blood could not vote, own property, testify in court against whites, or intermarry with them."[18] Although Emancipation came to Black Texans on June 19, 1865, when federal troops landed in Galveston, property rights were not enforced until the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau, and even then, there were constant issues regarding land ownership.[19]

African Americans in Southeastern New Mexico

In his dissertation, historian Timothy Nelson writes about the creation of the Blackdom Townsite Company in 1903 in Southeastern New Mexico, where thirteen men of African descent settled and established a Black enclave.[20] His research furthers the narrative of the presence of Black people in the West via the history of the town site, which constructs "a new narrative that allows for the further expansion in the study of the Black People of the West with the use of a new conceptual framework," what he terms *Afro-Frontierism*.[21] Nelson writes, "Blackdom, New Mexico, was an all-Black frontier town that began in 1902 and dissolved around 1930 during the Great Depression."[22] At its height, the town had people who had moved there from Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, California, Texas, and Virginia.[23] The city existed for thirty years and "endured barratry, drought, doubt, and revival and in its last decade became home to oil exploration."[24]

In an illustration in his dissertation, Nelson presents a map titled "Afro-Frontierist Borderland Post-1865," where he mapped out Black sites with accompanying dates of establishment: Stamford, Texas (June 18, 1865); Galveston, Texas (June 18, 1865); Dora, New Mexico (1870s); Greenwood Block, Tulsa, Oklahoma (1870s–1920s); Tlahualilode de Zaragosa, Durango, Mexico (1890s); Fort Huachuca, Arizona (1890s); Columbus, New Mexico (1890s); Fort Selden, New Mexico (1880s); Blackdom, New Mexico (1903–1930s); and Vado, New Mexico (located 32 miles from El Paso, Texas) (1903–1930s).[25] These sites document the existence of African American communities in the borderlands comprising Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico as places where individuals could start new lives and prosper, but only up to a specific point in history.

Emergence of the African American Community

Forty-seven African Americans arrived in the township of El Paso, which had a population of 3,403 in 1880, a year before the arrival of the railroads in 1881.[26] Many African Americans who came to El Paso were members of the city's middle class. Jim Crow laws segregated public facilities and transportation from 1891 to 1956, and as Dailey writes, "El Paso was the transition point where all African Americans traveling through Texas moved to the Jim Crow car, the last car of the train."[27] They worked as train workers in boiler rooms, as well as porters, cooks, and as assistants to mechanics, etc. In the early 1900s, there were also Black cowboys in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico.[28] African Americans also lived in Segundo Barrio (El Paso's Second Ward), and a sizable number of them moved into the outskirts of the El Paso city limits in what was the Lincoln Park community. In the "teens," due to redlining, African Americans and Mexicans lived alongside each other in all communities. Security maps from the 1930s show the Lincoln Park community as redlined.[29]

By the early twentieth century, Mexicans outnumbered Americans in El Paso due to the unstable conditions during the Mexican Revolution and changing conditions in the United States. Historian Mario García states, "As increased fighting broke out in the north-central parts of Mexico between 1914 and 1916, thousands of Mexicans entered El Paso."[30] He adds, "In one June week in 1916 immigration officials admitted 4,850 Mexicans into the city."[31] This number was added to the thousands already living in El Paso in 1916.[32]

El Paso's African American elementary school, Douglass Grammar and High School, was built in South El Paso in the 1880s, which served both an elementary and high school. South El Paso became an enclave for the first wave of the Black community in El Paso. According to a publication titled *I'm Building Me a Home: El Paso's African American Community, 1539–1998*, Douglass School graduated many African American students who went on to make significant contributions in the El Paso community and throughout the nation.[33] A new, more modern school was built in 1920 at 101 South Eucalyptus Street, and the original building was torn down in 1956 after integration.[34]

According to Dailey, "the second phase from 1900 to 1920, the 'Enduring Community' was established as racial progress and reform became central to El Paso's black population."[35]

From 1920 to 1930, as part of the Great Migration during World War I, when African American migrated into cities, about 42,000 migrated to the West.[36] As the United States entered World War I and workers became scarce, a number of African Americans relocated to El Paso. Lincoln Park was at the edge of the city limits, and numerous African Americans moved there, as well as to Segundo Barrio.[37] The 1920 El Paso city directory listed five Black churches in the city, two of which were in the Lincoln Park community: Mount Zion Baptist Church, formerly at 3129 Durazno (Rev. William Green, pastor) and Phillip's Chapel at 301 Tornillo Street (Rev. T.C. Cook, pastor).[38]

Even though the Great Depression was not felt as profoundly as in other parts of the country, in the 1930s it created a mortgage and rental crisis similar to the subprime crisis experienced by the United States from 2007 to 2010. This mortgage crisis resulted in an appraisal process by local valuators (evaluators) contracted by the Home Owners' Loan Cooperation (HOLC) who included race in the evaluation mix; thus, homes and rental properties in areas with substantial African American communities like Lincoln Park, East El Paso, and Segundo Barrio, were devalued or "redlined."

In cities with large minority communities like El Paso, Texas, from 1950 to 1960, African Americans and Mexican Americans experienced discrimination and segregation via racial covenants and redlining. In comparison to other cities, African Americans and Mexican Americans in El Paso experienced the loss of home ownership at a smaller scale compared to others in larger cities, yet the concept laid the foundation for the systematic denial of home ownership enjoyed by whites in the United States. The denial of home ownership and redlining of minority communities, with the consequential loss of billions of dollars of generational wealth, is at the heart of the current reparation debate.[39]

Residents of these communities lacked the effective political power to mobilize and fight against the destruction of their communities.[40] It was also an era when cities engaged in slum busting in minority neighborhoods, furthering the goals of urban renewal tied to governmental funding. As historian Ronald William Lopez writes in his 1999 dissertation, "The racially motivated use of eminent domain to demolish poor and minority neighborhoods for 'urban renewal'—also called 'Negro removal' or 'Chicano removal'—was widespread in the late 1950s and 1960s."[41] Exerting power over people's lives often removes their voices, yet Lopez's work does quite the opposite, providing agency to the Ravine comezmunity members who were active participants in their history, resisting community destruction as they stood up to the forces pushing to evict them.[42]

Redlining would have a long-lasting effect on ownership patterns in El Paso neighborhoods. Lincoln Park, as well as South El Paso, the East Side, and the future path of Interstate 10, appeared on a redlining map as early as the 1930s [see Figure 2].[43] Lincoln Park's pattern of discriminatory land valuation and zoning made it easier to build several freeways through it. Redlining was apparent in the Lincoln Park community labeled as "D-1" in the legend of the redlined map: "This is entirely a Mexican residential section wherein the houses are very poor, mostly unfinished adobe."[44] In the 1950s, properties in the Lincoln Park community were cheaper to purchase for highway building than those in the Loretto Addition, which included homes in Austin Terrace. The latter was described by HOLC in the following way: "A-4, This is Austin Terrace, the exclusive and highly restricted residential section of El Paso; It is zoned for high class construction; Houses therein, all built during the last fifteen years, range in price from $10,000 to $50,000.00."[45]

The Lincoln Park Neighborhood and the Tremé community in New Orleans, Louisiana, provide two identical case studies regarding how urban space

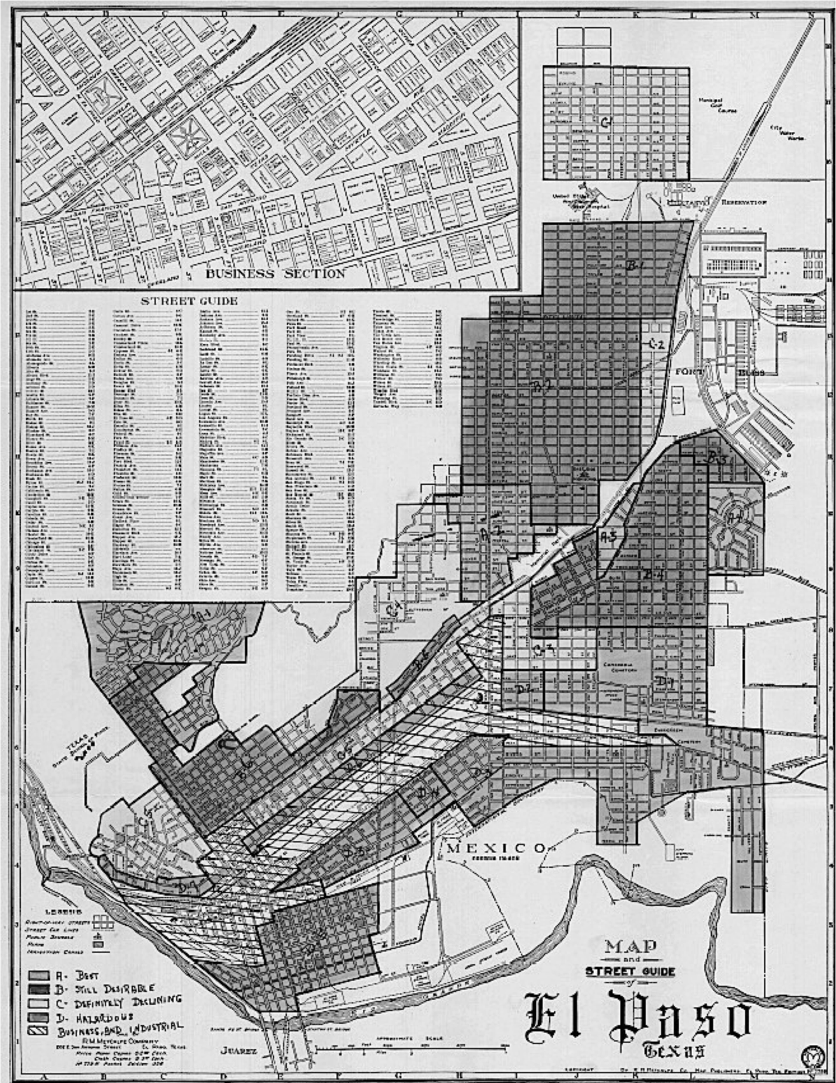

Figure 2: El Paso "Residential Security" map, Record Group 195: Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1933 - 1989, Box 154, Folder for El Paso, Texas. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

reconfigured neighborhoods in the 1950s. Both communities experienced the brunt of displacement by highways and had no formal representation or voices to oppose highway construction through their neighborhoods. Displacement of people in both El Paso and on Claiborne Avenue mirrored other communities

of color throughout the country that became victims in the construction of Interstate 10.[46]

Redlining condemned neighborhoods like Lincoln Park to long-term decay by stigmatizing residents as loan security risks. As urban historian Eric Avila describes in his book *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*, “Deeming crowded neighborhoods, older properties, industrial activity, and what it called ‘the presence of inharmonious racial and nationality groups’ as anathema to secure investment, the FHA’s *Underwriting Manual*, a veritable bible among private lending institutions, directed housing loans to the suburban periphery and opened doors for the exodus of people and capital away from urban centers.”[47] The ill-effects of redlining remained in El Paso neighborhoods into the 1970s.

The Lincoln Park Neighborhood

By the early twentieth century, Anglo-Americans outnumbered people of Mexican descent in El Paso by two to one. In 1910, 13,000 people who were born in Mexico resided in El Paso.[48] However, the Mexican Revolution would change the city.[49] Historian Mario García states: “As increased fighting broke out in the north-central parts of Mexico between 1914 and 1916, thousands of Mexicans entered El Paso.”[50] He adds, “In one June week in 1916 immigration officials admitted 4,850 Mexicans into the city.”[51] This number added to the thousands already living in El Paso in 1916.[52]

The Lincoln Park community was an emerging neighborhood in the early twentieth century in El Paso’s East Side located at the end of the city limits. African Americans lived alongside Mexicans. Mexicans migrated north to El Paso and other areas after the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910.

The shortage of workers during World War I facilitated the movement of African Americans out of the rural south; some relocated to El Paso. Lincoln Park was at the edge of the city limits, and numerous African Americans moved there as well as to *Segundo Barrio*.[53] El Paso census records from 1900 to 1970 show African Americans [Table 1].

Dr. Lawrence Nixon chartered the El Paso Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1914. It was the first branch in Texas.[54] Historian Will Guzman’s analysis of member addresses reveals that many NAACP members lived in the Lincoln Park community on streets that were later removed due to the creation of Interstate 10.[55] Many NAACP members worked as laborers and railroad sleeping car porters. There is little doubt that African Americans experienced racism in El Paso. As Ann Gabbert writes, “by 1922, El Paso’s Frontier Klan No. 100 had a hardcore membership of least fifteen hundred, including former mayor Tom Lea, and they were able to sweep the school board elections.”[56] After its short-lived two-year existence, the Klan disintegrated into opposing factions but managed to

Table 1: African Americans by Year (1900 to 1970) in El Paso, Texas.

1900	466 African Americans or 2.9 percent
1910	1,452 African Americans or 3.7 percent
1920	1,330 African Americans or 1.7 percent
1930	1,023 males and 947 females or 1.9 percent
1940	1,281 males and 1,232 females or 2.6 percent
1950	2,207 males and 1,975 females or 3.2 percent
1960	3,017 males and 2,927 females or 2.15 percent
1970	5,422 males and 4,630 females or 3.12 percent

"Census Report: El Paso, Texas, 1900-1990," (Chase Bank of Texas in Celebration of Black History Month, February 2, 1998, El Paso, Texas), 27.

elect members to the El Paso school board.[57] In one of his studies, historian Will Guzman lists members of the organization.[58]

The Great Depression in the 1930s created anti-Mexican sentiments and spurred a decline of homeownership and rental properties as thousands of Mexicans were deported or left on their own. Redlining, created by the federal government, stigmatized largely African American, as well as Mexican, El Paso neighborhoods. Mexican students attended inferior schools in the period of Americanization. Yet even amid the Depression and the deportation of Mexicans, Lincoln Park residents who were intent on bettering their neighborhood built their community church *El Calvario* under the direction of Father Pacheco.

As World War II ended the Depression, the Lincoln Park neighborhood emerged as an idyllic but conflicted community with dramatic changes to unfold with the creation of El Paso's freeways in the 1960s. In 1956, states were allocated funds by the federal government to purchase properties via the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which sought to create a national interstate system, as well as other freeways.[59] Urban renewal and highway construction were intertwined with the displacement of residents and were coupled with politics, insider knowledge and interests, housing, suburbanization, and the needs of school districts. The creation of highways across neighborhoods created a ripple effect that displaced families and altered communities and created new ones.

African Americans in El Paso's East Side

African Americans and Mexican Americans moved into the Lincoln Park community and what has been referred to as El Paso's "East Side." What was typically called the East Side comprised several smaller subdivisions: Payne's Subdivision, Moeller's Subdivision, Garden Subdivision, and East El Paso Subdivision. The East Side is bordered by the present-day streets of Cotton Street to the west, Montana Street to the north, Stevens Street to the east and

what was the Rio Grande or the U.S.-Mexico Boundary line to the south. The East Side was a racially mixed neighborhood that included a large percentage of Mexican Americans and African Americans. One of those families was the William "W.C." Calhoun Parish family who lived on Yandell Street.[60] In her book, *Renegade for Peace and Justice: Congresswoman Barbara Lee Speaks for Me,* Congresswoman Barbara Lee states Mr. Parish was the first African American letter carrier in El Paso in 1947.[61]

Other neighborhoods, such as "El Pujido," rose in proximity to the Southern Pacific Train Roundhouse (formerly at the corner of Piedras and Missouri Streets). El Pujido was a racially mixed neighborhood that may have acquired its name due its proximity to the train roundhouse. El Pujido, located south of Texas Street on San Antonio Street, between Cotton and Lee Streets, sits on the edge of Segundo Barrio (El Paso's Second Ward). Present-day maps show that approximately thirty-five homes make up Barrio Pujido. Nolan Richardson Jr., the noted basketball player and coach, was born in the barrio on Ladrino (Brick) Street on December 27, 1941.

On September 20, 2013, Trish Long, the librarian at the *El Paso Times*, ran a photograph of Lyndon B. Johnson visiting a house on 3101 Gateway West (formerly 3101 Madera Street) during his 1964 visit to El Paso. The photograph reveals an ethnically mixed area Lincoln Park community. Madera Street became Gateway West with the creation of Interstate 10. In 1954, Rebecca Sterling's family moved to Lincoln Park to a house on the corner of Copia and Manzana (what is now Gateway West), when she was one year old.[62] Her family had lived in Lincoln Park before the freeway, and the homes in her neighborhood all had porches like the homes on Yandell and Montana Streets. Across from Copia Street, there were two *presidios* (tenements). The Lincoln community was next to an *embarcadero* (a stockyard), a cattle slaughterhouse, and a graveyard, which used to be next to a dairy.[63] The stockyard was the Independent Union Stock Yards Company, located at 3802 Durazno Street.[64] According to Sterling, "there were a lot of Hispanics, a lot of African-Americans, some Puerto Ricans, and Germans."[65] As Sterling recounts, the city of El Paso came and took their front yards to build Gateway East. It was not known whether families were compensated for the removal of their front yards.

As in El Paso, Texas, in the 1950s, residents fought against the creation of freeways, taking on state agencies and the local politicians supporting them, but the odds against them were insurmountable. As mentioned earlier in this paper, groups such as the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund filed lawsuits to implement equitable regulatory enforcement citing civil rights violations.[66] Moreover, decisions regarding the creation of El Paso's highways occurred in the 1950s–1960s, before the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The National Historic Preservation Act was created in 1966, but there was no evidence citizens or groups used it to prevent highway building in El Paso, Texas. Highways dramatically changed the landscape and people's psychological sense of place. El Paso as a small and sleepy place experienced the beginnings

of an urban transformation that continues to this day. One person lamented that change in a column, "Ask Mrs. Carroll," in the *El Paso Herald-Post*, writing "Dear Ann Carroll, I hate to see all these highways and freeways destroy the last vestige of sweet little sleepy El Paso."[67] Later in their letter, the writer states,

> I can remember when Lincoln Park School was in the "wilderness" and driving in the Lower Valley summer afternoons was a restful and cool respite with the smell of alfalfa blowing across your face and out past Ysleta to Socorro you could smell mesquite fires burning and see farms clear to the river.[68]

Alex Rosas notes that prior to the 1970s Alamogordo Street (present-day Yandell Street), located on the northern boundary of Concordia Cemetery in the Lincoln Park community, there was an enforced color line: whites lived north of the street and African Americans and Mexican Americans lived south of it.[69] By 1968, Interstate 10 and Highway 54 ran through the heart of Lincoln Park, changing its fabric as well as the character of other El Paso neighborhoods. These freeways, together with Highway 110, the Chamizal Freeway, and the Chamizal Settlement (1963–1964), displaced thousands of people in El Paso.[70] These freeways now converge at present-day Lincoln Park.

In the 1940s, the Lincoln Park community was the western portion of El Paso's East Side. A sample of the 1940 U.S. Federal census lists five African American males and one Mexican male who worked for the railroad in the community. Lee Moppins, 60, worked as a janitor in a department store and later worked for the railroad. He lived at 3204 Manzana Street. Other workers included Brillo Smith, 54, who worked as a head in-brakeman and lived at 308 Cebada; Robert Berry, 44, who worked as a porter and lived at 3306 Manzana Street; James Frazier, 34, who worked as a porter and lived at 3324 Manzana; Frank Woods, 50, who worked as a boiler helper and lived at 3326 Manzana; Robert E. Lee, 46, who worked as a porter and lived at 3330 Manzana; and Rafael Cruz, 39, who was a boiler helper who lived at 3329 Durazno Street.[71] These individuals are important to name because their presence documents that different ethnic groups all lived in proximity to each other in the Lincoln Park community. Later, Manzana Street was removed for the creation of Interstate 10. In 1955, the 75-year-old Moppins, who was working for the Southern Pacific Railroad, served with Robert E. Lee as El Paso Delegates for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters St. Louis Southwestern Zone Conference in Dallas, Texas.[72]

In an interview, H.L. Scales' sister, Mrs. Oralee Smith, stated that her aunt's husband was nicknamed "Country" Claybourne and he was from Louisiana.[73] She said her stepfather was a "CC Boy" (a member of the Colored Cavalry) and a cook; he arrived in El Paso in 1931 or 1932.[74] Mrs. Smith said she knew three Buffalo Soldiers. One of them was Mr. Brown, who is buried at Ft. Bliss.[75] Mrs. Smith's brother, H.L. Scales, confirmed they used to know Buffalo Soldiers

who lived in the Lincoln Park community.[76] Due to its proximity to Ft. Bliss, residents of Lincoln Park, including African Americans, were railroad workers and military men from Buffalo Soldiers to the Colored Cavalry. The Lincoln Park community was also at the end of the El Paso city limits.

There were other Black families in the neighborhood, including the Jake and Annie M. Manigo Family. The Manigo's home was located a few blocks from Lincoln School in the French Addition. The Manigo home was bought by the Highway Department on January 1, 1959, to create Interstate 10.[77]

Voices from the Barrios

Oral histories with members of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, which experienced a rapid change of the community's fabric, were essential in uncovering the history and texture of the Lincoln Park community before the arrival of the highways. Interviews demonstrate that African Americans and Mexican Americans coexisted in Lincoln Park without tensions.

Mrs. Oralee Smith remembers there were not very many cars in the neighborhood and the lions that were caged in the zoo at nearby Washington Park would scare her.[78] She attended Douglass Elementary and Bowie High School. When asked about attending Bowie High School, Mrs. Smith said she and her friends organized a club called "The Charms."[79] The Charms [Figure 3] would walk to Bowie High School as a group through various neighborhoods so there would be less of a chance of being roughed up; in addition, they walked alongside the railroad tracks going to and coming from Bowie High School in Segundo Barrio.[80] The group included Nolan Richardson, his two sisters, and

Figure 3: Members of "The Charms." Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Oralee Smith, El Paso, Texas.

Mrs. Smith and her friend Dorothy, who all attended Bowie High School. Her other friends attended Jefferson High School and El Paso Technical School. Mrs. Smith said she was inspired by Richardson, who she described as "always very calm"; her experience walking back and forth to school was terrifying, but "Sam" as they called Richardson, would put their fears to rest.[81] The Charms may have had reasons to band together for protection because neighborhoods during the 1950s were not safe for African American youth. Mrs. Smith stated there were more than twenty-five African American families in the Lincoln Park area, but African Americans also lived in Segundo Barrio (El Paso's Second Ward). She graduated from high school in 1956 and attended Brown's business school until she got married. Her husband traveled throughout Europe while in the military service.

In an interview, David Prieto, who formerly lived in the neighborhood, said that in the 1950s there were five to six Black families in the Lincoln Park community. He said, "What was amazing back then was that the kids, the Black kids around our age, most all of them spoke Spanish, just like we did, and they even spoke English with an accent, you know?"[82] He said they just saw them like regular Chicanos like themselves. Teresa Orozco, a long-time resident, said when her family moved into Lincoln Park in 1957, the neighborhood was "puro Negro," meaning the people who lived in there were predominantly Black.[83]

In a January 3, 2005, article for *Newspaper Tree*, attorney Ray E. Rojas described the Lincoln Park community as a rough and tumble neighborhood. He theorizes that "[t]he ghost of Victoriano 'Viejo' Huerta, *borracho de la de patas mas chüecas*, roams drunk at night and the Ramsey Steel Company sits as a stable fortress nearby."[84] In his brief essay, Rojas captures some of the folklore associated with the Lincoln Park neighborhood. *La Roca* (the Rock) was situated where the University Medical Center (formerly R. E. Thomason Hospital) now stands. Mrs. Smith said African Americans started moving out of the Lincoln Park area to Hacienda Heights in El Paso's Eastside. She stated that at its height (from the 1940s to the 1950s), there were more than twenty-five African American families in the Lincoln Park area.

Recognizing the Contributions of the late Dr. Maceo Crenshaw Dailey Jr.

Dr. Maceo Dailey arrived at the University of Texas at El Paso in 1996 to head the University's first African American Studies department.[85] He spent almost twenty years teaching the field in a location that lacked a large African American community. In his academic and personal life, he delved into what it meant to be a Border African American scholar in a predominantly Mexican and Mexican American region. Dailey's 2003 article and later his coedited book *African Americans in El Paso* (2014, Arcadia Publishing) provide a methodology to frame the El Paso Black Experience from the 19th to early 20th centuries

in El Paso, Texas, along the U.S.-Mexico border, *en la frontera*, and to explore the ways urban space shaped society, culture, and power dynamics.[86]

An essay written by Dailey, "Border Black: The El Paso Story," situates the African American presence in West Texas within the urban and rural borderlands and suggests how it may have differed from that of other southern states.[87] In El Paso, African Americans did not encounter the racism that was prevalent in other parts of the country, or in other parts of Texas for that matter.[88] In West Texas they found a climate of acceptance.

Dailey states that "in migrating to the border region and specifically El Paso, individuals of African descent and African Americans sought their flight from oppression to opportunity, and in their new region of settlement endeavored to build communities and add their voices to the chorus for reform and positive change."[89] In the border region, positive change was possible, and West Texas represented a place where African Americans could be themselves, practice their religion, and not fear oppression as in other parts of the country. Dailey states: "To hone in on border black life in Texas, and its city of El Paso in particular, provides an excellent purview into the lives of African Americans and, in a few rare instances, enclaves on the Mexican side of the border where those of African lineage existed somewhere between the markers of survival and salvation."[90] Given Dailey's view of African Americans *en la frontera*, future work could study the mixture of cultures that developed at the U.S.-Mexico border and that occurs to this day, such as the Chicana/o-Black, as well as the Mexicana/o-Black experiences.

Conclusion

Much of the work on urbanization and displacement of communities has centered on the Black-White binary, with few studies situating African Americans and Mexican Americans who often lived alongside each other in neighborhoods at or near the U.S.-Mexico border in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[91] Prior to the Great Depression, El Paso was an important Chicano community in the Southwest, on par with San Antonio and other cities, and the Black community was part of its diversity. During the Depression, from 1929 to 1939, the Southwest saw record numbers of deportations. El Paso became a destination for thousands of Mexicans in a form of reverse migration of the Mexican Revolution, as thousands were deported or migrated back to Mexico to be repatriated.

This work seeks to situate Dr. Maceo Dailey's writing on the North American West as a Black space with varied and deep possibilities and the efforts of the African American community to carve out a space for themselves in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The West, informed by Black identities, becomes a more tolerant environment, yet one still fraught with ethnic issues, but nonetheless, it is one where lives were more manageable. This research calls for a fuller

analysis of Black life in El Paso, Texas, which also includes Ciudad Juárez and surrounding communities. This essay focuses on El Paso's Lincoln Park community inside the city's East Side, yet additional work is needed to fully research, analyze, and weave together the complex story of the Black community of El Paso, Texas, and the new directions it took in the West. It is ironic that Western studies typically do not include El Paso as part of the West, but we in El Paso feel that in addition to being part of it, we are also part of numerous other historical, geographical, cultural and political crossroads.

Notes

1. Julian Lim, *Porous Borders: Multiracial Migrations and the Law in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 3.
2. Howard Campbell and Michael Williams. "Black Barrio on the Border: "Blaxicans" of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1530130.
3. Ibid., 2.
4. Maceo Crenshaw Dailey Jr., Katheryn Smith-McLynn, and Cecilia Gutierrez Venable. *African Americans in El Paso* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing [Images of America], 2014), 7.
5. Welborn J. Williams Jr., "The Buffalo Soldiers' Brush with 'Jim Crow' in El Paso" (master's thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1996), 7.
6. Quintard Taylor, "Comrades of Color: Buffalo Soldiers in the West, 1866–1917," *Western Voices: 125 Years of Colorado Writing* (New York: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004), excerpted from *Colorado Heritage*, Spring (1996): 252–73.
7. Ibid, 2–3.
8. Ibid, 7.
9. Brian D. Behnken, ed., *The Struggle in Black and Brown: African American and Mexican American Relations During the Civil Rights Era* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920* (New York: NYU Press, 2005); Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the West, 1528–1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1998); and Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
10. Williams Jr., "The Buffalo Soldiers' Brush with 'Jim Crow'," 8.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, 7.
13. Will Guzman, *Civil Rights in the Texas Borderlands: Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and Black Activism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 39, 40.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 33.
16. Segundo Barrio was Second Ward when El Paso was divided into four wards: First Ward, Second Ward, Third Ward, and Fourth Ward.
17. Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850- 1930* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 22.
18. Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 8
19. Ibid, 40.
20. Timothy Eugene Nelson, "The Significance of the Afro-Frontier in American History Blackdom, Barratry, and Bawdyhouses in the Borderlands, 1900–1930" (PhD diss., University of Texas at El Paso, 2015), 28.
21. Ibid., 1.
22. Ibid., 5.
23. Ibid., 97; *Topeka Plaindealer*, December 20, 1912.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 2.
26. Maceo Dailey Jr., "Border Black: The El Paso Story," in *Dígame! Policy & Politics on the Texas Border*, ed. Christine Thurlow Brenner, Irasema Coronado, and Dennis L. Soden (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 2003), 311.
27. Dailey Jr., Smith-McLynn, and Venable, *African Americans in El Paso*, 22.
28. Nelson, "The Significance of the Afro-Frontier in American History Blackdom," 17.

29. El Paso "Residential Security" map, Record Group 195: Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1933–1989, Box 154, Folder for El Paso, Texas. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

30. Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920*. New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1981, 44.

31. Ibid.

32. Figures vary, but according to historian Ricardo Romo, U.S. sources reported in 1916 that 17,198 Mexicans immigrated to the United States, and Mexican sources reported the number at 49,932. Ricardo Romo, "Table 1, Mexican Immigration to The United States 1910–1930" in "Responses to Mexican Migration, 1910–1930," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1975): 178. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. https://0-www-ingentaconnect-com.lib.utep.edu/content/csrc/aztlan/1975/00000006/00000002/art00004 (accessed October 22, 2017). It is important to note that not all Mexicans who migrated to the United States stayed in the ports of entry like El Paso.

33. One such Douglass School graduate was Augustus O'Neil Moody. Moody was born in 1895. He was a husband, father, teacher, and postal employee. He graduated from Douglass Grammar and High School in 1912 and was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama.[add the following information: The first site of Douglass Grammar and High School was at Kansas and Fourth Streets in South El Paso and it served students from 1891 to 1920. The second site of the school was at 101 South Eucalyptus Street, in El Paso, Texas 79905 which served Black students from 1920 to 1956. In 1956 the school was closed and it later reopened as an Elementary School at the same location. Source: "Return to Our El Paso Roots, Reunion Schedule of Events, October 1-7, 2019, El Paso, Texas.] His major was manual training, which he taught in Waco, Texas, until 1918. He served in World War I, attaining the rank of Sergeant First Class. He married Odessa Long in June 1924 and worked as a Postal Office Employee in Los Angeles for 30 years until he retired in his early 50s. He died April 4, 1952. Chase Bank of Texas in Celebration of Black History Month, *I'm Building Me A Home: El Paso's African American Community, 1539-1998*. El Paso: Chase Bank of Texas, 1998.

34. Ibid., 15.

35. Dailey Jr., "Border Black," 312.

36. Theodore Kornweibel Jr. *The 'messenger' Magazine: 1917–1928*, (diss., Yale University, New Haven, 1971). Appendix 2, "Table 1: Net migration of blacks, by region, 1910-1930," in "An Economic and Social Profile of Black Life in the Twenties," 384. *ProQuest*, https://0-search-proquest-com.lib.utep.edu/docview/287897327?accountid=7121. (accessed July 21, 2017).

37. Interview with Oralee Smith by the author, El Paso, Texas, October 1, 2016.

38. *El Paso City Directory*, *1920* (El Paso, TX: Hudspeth Directory Co., 1920), 208. University of Texas at El Paso. Accessed May 31, 2017, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth285898). Other Black churches in El Paso included Second Baptist Church, 401 S. Virginia (Rev. J.R. Jackson, pastor) and three Methodist Episcopal churches: Myrtle Avenue Church at 2023 Myrtle Ave. (Rev. C.H. Anderson, pastor); and Visitor's Chapel, 501 Tays Street (Rev. H.A. Wells, pastor).

39. Kyle Eustice, "Testimony During 1st Congressional Hearing on Reparations Yields Heavy Emotion," HipHopDX, June 19, 2019, accessed June 25, 2019, https://hiphopdx.com/news/id.51809/title.testimony-during-1st-congressional-hearing-on-reparations-yields-heavy-emotion#

40. Ronald William Lopez, "The Battle for Chávez Ravine: Public Policy and Chicano Community Resistance in Post-War Los Angeles, 1945–1962" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999), 12.

41. Ibid., 17.

42. Ibid., 30.

43. Home Owners' Loan Corporation (El Paso "Residential Security") map, 1936.

44. Ibid.

45. R.L. Olson, "Confidential Report of a Survey in El Paso, Texas for the Mortgage Rehabilitation Division, Home Owners' Loan Corporation," Washington, D.C., May 6, 1936, 14. Record Group 195: Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1933 - 1989, Box 154, Folder for El Paso, Texas. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. The first page of the survey was titled "Summary Survey of El Paso, Texas by the Mortgage Rehabilitation Decision of R & S, Report, May 6, 1936 "Confidential Report of a Survey in El Paso, Texas for the Mortgage Rehabilitation Division, Home Owners' Loan Corporation," Description of Areas, 2.

46. Beverly H. Wright, "New Orleans Neighborhoods Under Siege," in *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race and Class Barriers to Mobility*, ed. Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson (Montpelier, VT: New Society Publishers, 1997), 133.

47. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 34.

48. Bureau of the Census, *Abstract of the Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910 with Supplement for Texas* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 650.

49. Oscar J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez Since 1848* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1975), 160.

50. García, *Desert Immigrants*, 44.

51. Ibid.

52. Figures vary, but according to historian Ricardo Romo, U.S. sources reported in 1916 that 17,198 Mexicans immigrated to the United States and Mexican sources reported the number at 49,932. Romo, "Responses to Mexican Migration." It is important to note that not all Mexicans who migrated to the United States via El Paso, stayed in El Paso. Miguel Juárez, "From Concordia to Lincoln Park, An Urban History of Highway Building in El Paso, Texas" (PhD diss, University of Texas at El Paso, 2018), 104.

53. Interview with Oralee Smith by the author, El Paso, Texas, October 1, 2016.

54. NAACP El Paso Branch, About/History, History of the El Paso Branch of the NAACP, accessed February 22, 2018, http://naacpelpaso.org/history/.

55. Will Guzman, "Appendix: List of NAACP Members," "The El Paso Branch of the 1923 and 1929 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *Password, The El Paso County Historical Society* 60, no. 3, (Fall 2016): 85–87.

56. Ann R. Gabbert, "Defining the Boundaries of Care: Local Responses to Global Concerns in El Paso Public Health Policy, 1881-1941" (PhD diss., University of Texas at El Paso, 2006), 428. See also Shawn Lay, "Imperial Outpost on the Border: El Paso's Frontier Klan No. 100" in *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 67–96, as well as Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan* (El Paso, TX: Western Press, 1985).

57. Ibid.

58. Guzman, "Appendix: List of NAACP Members," 85–87.

59. Richard F. Weingroff, "Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956: Creating the Interstate System," *Public Roads* 60, no. 1 (Summer 1996), 1. In his essay titled "A Vast System of Interconnected Highways: Before the Interstates," Weingroff writes, "In a presidential election year of 1956, a Congress controlled by Democrats combined with a Republican President to give the country a national highway network that President Dwight D. Eisenhower later spoke of as one of the greatest accomplishments of his 8 years in office." It is now named in his honor: The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

60. Barbara Lee, *Renegade for Peace and Justice, Congresswoman Barbara Lee Speaks for Me,* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 9.

61. Ibid.

62. Telephone interview with Rebecca Valdez Sterling, by the author, September 8, 2010.

63. Stockyards in the Lincoln Park community included the Independent Union Stock Yards Company at 3802 Durazno St. (1936).

64. El Paso City Directory, 1921 (El Paso, TX: Hudspeth Directory Co., 1921), 946. University of Texas at El Paso. Accessed March 4, 2018, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth285899/.

65. Ibid.

66. Bill Lann Lee, "Civil Rights and Legal Remedies: A Plan of Action," in *Just Transportation, Dismantling Race and Class Barriers to Mobility*, eds. Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson (Montpelier, VT: New Society Publishers, 1997), 157–72.

67. "Can Anyone Remember E.P. When It Was Sleepy Town?" Ask Mrs. Carroll, *El Paso Herald-Post*, Monday, February 8, 1965, Section C-Page 2.

68. Ibid.

69. Interview with Alex and Robert "Robi" Rosas by the author in El Paso, Texas, on June 27, 2016.

70. J.F. Friedkin, United States Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission, "A Preliminary Report on United States Problems in Acquisition of Private Properties in Connection with the Proposed Chamizal Settlement, August 2, 1963." Brenda Porras, United States International Boundary and Water Commission (Agency) (2016), request by the author, released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request no. 2017-04.

71. Department of Commerce–Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 Population Schedule, J. Pct. #1, Block nos. 523, Lorraine C. Cole, Enumerator, Heritage Quest. https://0-www-ancestryheritagequest-com.lib.utep.edu/interactive/2442/m-t0627-04183-00430?pid=158880643&backurl=https://0-search-ancestryheritagequest-com.lib.utep.edu/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv%3D1%26qh%3DKsyKRklfjIK1r4LKMoarNg%253d%253d%26db%3D1940usfedcen%26gss%3Dangs-d%26new%3D1%26rank%3D1%26msT%3D1%26gsfn%3DRafael%26gsfn_x%3D0%26gsln%3DCruz%26gsln_x%3D0%26msrpn__ftp%3DEl%2BPaso%2BCounty%252c%2BTexas%252c%2BUSA%26msrpn%3D960%26_F0B3C3B8%3D3329%2BDurazno%2BStreet%26_83004003-n_xcl%3Df%26MSAV%3D1%26uidh%3Dah1%26pcat%3D35%26fh%3D0%26h%3D158880643%26recoff%3D%26ml_rpos%3D1&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true (accessed March 25, 2017).

72. Philip A. Randolph, Editor, "Southwestern Zone Conference," *The Black Worker* XXVI, no. 5 (May 1955), 5.

73. Interview with Mrs. Oralee Smith by the author, El Paso, Texas, October 1, 2016.

74. Ibid.

75. The Buffalo soldier Ms. Smith was referring to might have been Donnie Wah Brown, who was born on April 8, 1908, and died June 1, 1995. He lived at 3203 Wyoming Street in the East El Paso Addition that was next to Lincoln Park neighborhood. He was a Master Sergeant and Private in the U.S. Army (discharged in 1953). He served in World War II and Korea. He is at the Section O Site 1878 at the Ft. Bliss National Cemetery. Ms. Smith told me during her interview on October 1, 2016, that Mr. Brown, as she called him (not knowing his first name), is buried at the Ft. Bliss National Cemetery, one of nine Buffalo Soldiers buried there. Interview with Mrs. Oralee Smith by the author, El Paso, Texas, October 1, 2016.

76. Interview with H. L. Scales by the author, El Paso, Texas, September 27, 2016.

77. El Paso County Deed Records, available at epcounty.com. (accessed October 10, 2016).

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Interview with David Prieto by the author, May 14, 2015.

83. Interview with Teresa Orozco by the author, September 24, 2016.

84. Ray Eli Rojas, "Under I-10: Life in Lincoln and La Roca," *Newspaper Tree*, January 3, 2005.

85. Dr. Maceo Crenshaw Dailey Jr. received a Ph.D. in American and Afro-American History at Howard University in 1983. His academic appointments included the African American Studies Program and Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas at El Paso from 1996 to his passing in 2015. Among his numerous academic appointments, he was an associate professor in the History Department at Morehouse College, 1993–1996; associate professor, American and African-American History at Spelman College, 1988–1883; assistant professor, American and African-American History and Comparative Slavery, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 1982–1986. Among his many professional activities, grants, awards, recognition, publications, editorial work, and presentations, and advisory work, Dr. Dailey supervised two dissertations and five MA theses, and served on four dissertation committees and three MA thesis committees. He was also a consultant for numerous state and historical museums, provided countless media interviews, and was active in numerous humanities and history boards. Dr. Maceo Crenshaw Dailey Jr. Curriculum Vitae, n.d.

86. Dailey Jr., Smith-McLynn, and Venable, *African Americans in El Paso*.

87. Dailey Jr., "Border Black," 307–24.

88. Williams Jr., "The Buffalo Soldiers' Brush with 'Jim Crow'," 8.

89. Dailey Jr., "Border Black," 310.

90. Ibid., 309–10. Lutenski, Emily. *West of Harlem: African American Writers and the Borderlands* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015), 19. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2015.

91. Emily Lutenski, *West of Harlem: African American Writers and the Borderlands*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2015, 19.