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## Midterm

### **Section 1: Keywords**

#### **1.The “Unwritten Law”:**

The “Unwritten Law” was basically the justification of violent and racist people would use to justify their acts of “putting human beings to death without complaint under oath, without trial by jury, without opportunity to make defense, and without right of appeal.”(Lynch Law in America)This wasn’t really a law, the people who committed the lynchings only used this “unwritten law” to ‘prove’ that their actions were not a crime, it was only justice. It’s ridiculous to think that people really thought it was okay to punish innocent people by lynching them and then, simply justify their acts by this law they believed really existed in their country. It’s sad to learn that even up to this day, there has not been a law that legally prohibits or bans lynching in America, after all the deaths that occurred due to lynching, America has not really understood the impact lynching had amongst people of color.

#### **2.Pan-toting:**

Pan-toting, also known as service pan, was the practice of African Americans workers taking away table scraps or dry goods from their white employers as a form of

compensation. Tera Hunter mentions that “ domestic workers transformed raw products into consumable goods for their own families, the same labor that they performed in the homes of their employers, albeit with much more austerity.”(Hunter 67) She also says that strategies like pan-toting “helped working class women stretch their slim material resources and made the difference between starvation and subsistence.”(Hunter 135) This was considered another form of slavery since the people were not paid for their labor, they were only given left-overs, which may have helped them a bit, but African Americans were not treated like people. From my perspective, white americans did not want to move on and treat people of color with respect as they should have been treated, for them this may have been a fair deal, but in reality African Americans were not compensated for their hard work they would perform for many hours in the day.

### **3.The Birth of a Nation**

The Birth of a Nation was the first film shown in the White House in 1915, based on the parts we saw in class, this film showed the changes in voting, interracial marriage, the lynchings, the KKK, etc. “There was a scene where they showed how the KKK became an idea when a man saw small children scaring each other while wearing white bed sheets/blankets on their heads. The man thought it would be a great idea to scare African Americans, however it’s clear that the KKK’ goal was not only to ‘scare’ them, but to punish African Americans for their ‘crimes’.”(*The Birth of a Nation*) It’s really frustrating to learn how white americans always tried to find a way to terrorize or attack African Americans simply because of their color and their fear of their population growing more and more. Overall, this film was simply a terrible, starting with the

blackface actors, maybe they tried to show what was going on during the time it was filmed, but they did not really think about the repercussions and effects it would have on African Americans.

#### **4.The Neighborhood Union**

This social settlement organization, founded by Lugenia Burns Hope, provided many services associated with settlement houses of that period. According to Hunter, “one of its(NU) first priorities was to educate reformers and the broader community on the prevention and care of infectious diseases like tuberculosis.”(Hunter 137) Also, this organization provided leadership for an anti-tuberculosis campaign and the development of community clinics.”(Hunter 137) People of color began to create organizations that would actually help their own communities live in decent homes and receive adequate medical services. They had to come up with different ways to help each other and progress in a society that did not want to see them get better as a population/ community.

#### **5.Amy Jacques Garvey**

Amy Jacques Garvey was the second wife of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, she was involved in his organization, Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). In the assigned reading, it clearly states “Amy Garvey’s woman’s page, “Our Women and What They Think,” published in the Negro World, the UNIA’s weekly propaganda newspaper, promoted the notion that it was essential for black women to develop a political consciousness to “uplift” the race and ultimately “redeem” Africa.”(A.J.Garvey Reading) She definitely believed that a woman was more valued and important if she was educated and had the necessary knowledge to contribute to her community and society. Just like

nowadays, women are encouraged to become educated to be at the same competitive level as the men, it was really interesting to learn that during this time, women like Amy were courageous enough to motivate other women of color to learn as much as they could to progress as women overall.

### **6. Ida B. Wells**

Ida B. Wells was an anti-lynching crusader and militant journalist who was born to slave parents in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She became a teacher at age 14 in Memphis in order to support her siblings after the deaths of her parents during the yellow fever epidemic. She then became a journalist after being fired from the public schools, on May 21, 1892 she published an editorial in *Free Speech*, suggesting that “white women voluntarily engaged in interracial sexual unions with black men, which aroused extreme hostility and rage among Southern white men.” (Lynch Law in America) Ida B. Wells was deeply affected by the lynchings in America especially since three of her male friends were lynched in 1892, she knew that from then that “lynching” was the greatest crime of America towards the African Americans. This helps me prove my point that the slogan of the current U.S president is false “Make America Great Again”, America has never been great, does lynching and slavery demonstrate “America’s Greatness”, no.

### **7. Thomas Moss**

Thomas Moss, was an African American, who along with two of his friends, opened up a grocery store in Memphis in 1892. “Unfortunately, they opened their store next to a white man’s grocery store which eventually brought very tragic consequences. Based on my understanding, one day there was an altercation outside both stores, two of Thomas

friends and the white store owner got involved in the altercation while trying to calm things down. Within the altercation, something occur and the three black men were incarcerated, and while they were in prison, an angry mob dragged them from their cell and lynched all three of them.”(Lecture 10/2/19) This shows how white americans really hated people of color that they would torture and lynched them for a minor crime, but most of the times there wasn’t any crime at all. They always found ways to gather around and make up false accusation against African Americans simply to see them suffer as they were lynched.

### **8. Ten Percent Plan**

The Ten Percent Plan was proposed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, which pardon all southerners if they signed the agreement except for all Confederate officers and government officials, 10% of a population of each southern state agreed. Lincoln’s goal was to form a new government and end the war once and for all. He guaranteed southerners that he would protect their private property, though not their slaves.(Lecture 8/28/19) Not many people favored his proposal since it only benefited people in the southern states, even though they were the responsible ones for the war.

### **9. “Separate but Equal”**

Separate but equal was doctrine that guaranteed “equal protection” under the law to all the people in the U.S. People were provided public accommodations, housing, medical care, education, employment, and transportation, but these services were segregated by their race. (Lecture 9/23/19) Even if these appear to be a fair deal for both races, in reality I don’t think that the services provided to African Americans were the same as those

offered to white americans. Even up to this day, we continue to see how some communities, in certain cities, are still very segregated, it may not be something purposely arranged by the state government anymore, but unfortunately segregation still exists.

### **10. Sharecropping**

Sharecropping was a new system created after the black codes were eliminated from the late 1860s to the 1940s. Through this new system African Americans were allowed to rent equipment, animals, etc to grow help grow their crops. Most importantly if someone had debt, they had to go back and work for the same person and eliminate their debt. (Lecture 9/9/19) This was considered a new form of slavery since African Americans had to work for white americans to “pay off” their debt, but in reality they were never going to be able to pay off the entire amount due to excessive amount and the interests applied. Once again African Americans were not treated with respect and were promised false changes to the agriculture system only to keep them from owning their own lands and making their own profits off of them.

### **Section 2: Short-Answer Essays**

The era of “Southern Redemption” was a period of time filled with illegal acts and violence that affected all African Americans in the U.S. In the film, *The Birth of a Nation*, we saw how white Americans viewed African Americans and how they wanted to portray them in the film so that everyone could believe ‘who they truly are’. In the film, they were portrayed as men evil men who would harass white women or of

committing other crimes. Overall the film is extremely racist, especially because the actors used blackface, out of all the possibilities they had to complete this film, they chose to use this insulting characteristic just to attack African Americans. Through this film, I think people, specifically white americans, learned that it wasn't insulting if they used blackface since it was used in film, shown in the White House, which is why I think even up to this day, there has been cases were people are caught doing this insulting acts even if they think it's a joke.

In the article, "I've studied the history of Confederate Memorial, Here's what to do about them" by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, I learned a little more about the meaning and history behind the monuments that can be found in different states of the U.S. These monuments began to increase in popularity during the times when the South was fighting to resist political rights for black citizens. When the Jim Crow was being introduced, the amount of Confederate Monuments increase, especially after the Northerners gave up on racial justice. I completely agree with the recent removal of several of these statues/monuments in certain cities because they symbolize a tragic and violent time for African Americans, especially those who were directly affected by slavery, Jim Crow, lynching, etc. These monuments don't really represent something positive that occurred in our country, therefore they should not be displayed in the public to avoid any negative and sad memories from those years.

We've all learned about slavery at some point in our lives, not only do we understand the severity of this topic, but also know the effect it has on people who had family members who

were directly affected by slavery. Looking back at my education, I realize that as I got older, I began to learn more and more about slavery and how much this affected African Americans in particular. Even, by looking up the term 'slavery' on the internet we are able to see and learn more about the consequences of being a slave during the 1800s and 1900s. The history of slavery can be seen and be learned everywhere, it's really hard to avoid a controversial topic that causes a lot emotions in our society.

Southern black women became angry and frustrated, as time passed by, their working conditions and low wages were not changing. Tera Hunter specifically mentions that " domestic workers began to organize mass labor protest in the immediate post-war years. Strikes in Jackson, Mississippi, I 1866 and Galveston, Texas, in 1877 offer compelling examples of uprisings in this era."(Hunter 74) Laundry workers were the first group of black women to begin labor protests, since it was the most popular job for any black woman during this time. Their goal was to peacefully protest for something they believed was a simple right they deserved for working really hard and for so many hours every day. With the use of the protests, the white people that offered the black women jobs would eventually agree or at least offer something that would actually benefit the black women working for them. After all, white Americans needed the labor that the black women provided, therefore, they were desperate to end the protest and have them return to their duties.

Another way southern black women fought against their unfair labor was through city-wide meetings. According to Tera Hunter, " June 18,1866, they called city-wide meeting. They then submitted an open letter and formal petition to the mayor, which outlined grievances over the conditions of their labor together with a proposal for ameliorating the situation."



(Hunter 75) Black women were fighting for their goal in a peaceful yet intelligent way, In this case, they decided to write an open letter and formal petition to the mayor, to report their working conditions and low-wages. Not only did they petition for better working conditions and higher wages, but they also “petitioned local and federal officials to hire black police officers and teachers, to provide jobs on the state railroads, to build school buildings, to pave streets, and to deliver potable water and sewer connections.”(Hunter 85) Since they were following the footsteps of the railroad workers, who had previously protested for the same reasons, they wanted to help their men to acquire high job positions and continue with their labor movement.

To continue their labor movement, they also thought of the idea of creating trade organizations that would focus on their cultural duty which was laundry(washing). In early July of 1881, “twenty women and a few men met in a church in the Summer Hill neighborhood to form a trade organization.” (Hunter 88) Later, they were officially known as the Washing Society, elected officers, appointed committees, designated societies for each of the city’s five wards, and “establishing a uniform rate at a dollar per dozen pounds of wash.”(Hunter 88) Women were finally finding ways to succeed without having to work for a white american and not be paid enough for the amount of work done throughout the day. Due to the dramatic changes begun by the black women in the laundry are, women who worked as maids, cooks, nurses, etc also began to protest and strike against the companies of families they worked for, the labor movement continued.

### **Section 3: Long-Answer Essay**

“Lynch Law in America” is a very strong critique written in 1900 of the institutionalized racism and sexism that render African American men and women vulnerable to unspeakable acts of violence and racism. It starts off by saying that our country’s national crime is lynching, this represents the calculating deliberation of intelligent people who declare that there is an “unwritten law” that justifies them in putting human beings to death without complaint under oath, without trial by jury, without opportunity to make defense, and without right of appeal. Thousands of African Americans, men, women, and children, were brutally punished by shooting, drowning, hanging, and burning them alive.

In addition, it talks about the Ku-Klux Klan and their contribution to all the lynchings of African Americans. She describes specific situations where African Americans were punished for crimes they did not commit for example, if there was an altercation between a white man and colored man, the colored man had to die, either at the hands of the white man then and there or later at the hands of a mob that gathered quickly. If a man showed a spirit of courageous manhood he was hanged and the killing was justified by the declaration that he was a “saucy nigger”. Towards the end, there’s a section where she explicitly talks about how white people would advertise a lynching before it occur, very detailed descriptions of the way colored people were viciously tortured and then killed.

Based on what I read, she definitely convinces me to understand her point of view that America’s worst crime was lynching. There is section where she states “the nineteenth-century lynching mob cuts off ears, toes, and fingers, strips off flesh, and distributes portions of the body as souvenirs among the crowd.” Reading this was just unbelievable, by including these types of descriptions it shows me that she really wants people to understand the severity of lynching and

just how bad African Americans suffered during this time. This makes me think that maybe she's trying to say that America has done many injustices against colored people and is definitely not the "perfect" country many people think it is. Learning more about this country's history really makes me doubt the integrity and honesty of this country.

In my opinion, she focuses on the entire society that may not be aware of the tragic and unforgettable past of this country. She wrote this as a way of protesting or simply sharing her views on lynching. She wanted people to know and understand, then and now, that this problem existed and it affected so many African American families and that it will continue to be present in the memory of this country's history. She obviously wanted the lynchings to be over, however she knew that was never going to happen if everyone does not want to see that the country has many failures that need to be fixed. Self-government was her idea of beginning the change she wanted to see in the country.

Ultimately, it closes up by criticizing white people and the national anthem, also stating how the number of lynchings increased during that time, yet the government has done nothing to put a stop to it. Lynching is definitely the major challenge that African Americans had to go through and it's something that will never be forgotten.

Black men had limited job positions, they had to take any opportunity available to be able to survive in this country. For example, the marines did not accept African Americans, but the Navy did. Approximately 1,200 black men were enrolled in a training camp in Iowa, where they would never be promoted above "captain". Black troops were discriminated, treated unfairly, disrespected and were not expected to serve in combat. Also, out of the 380,000 men who served in World War I, only 3% were black.(Lecture 10/14/19) This just shows how undervalued

African Americans were during this time, even though they could perform the same or better the duties as a white Navy officer.

The issue that started the entire odyssey of the life of an African American was slavery. African Americans were treated worse than animals since the very beginning, there was no reason to treat them so violently. Their lives were so miserable that they prefer to migrate to other countries such as Africa in search of a better life. In 1875, a group of African Americans wrote a letter to the governor asking for help to move to Africa. “Then on April 1878, “The Azor”, a joint ship, embarked to Africa with 206 people , however 23 people died since the ship did not provide adequate care, food, conditions.” On June 1878, “they reached Liberia, unfortunately some people returned to the U.S since they were not able to succeed in Liberia.” (Lecture 10/2/19)

One of the triumphs of black freedom was their ability to work in job positions that involved politics. Approximately by 1863, black men were serving as delegates at the constitutional conventions and favored the republican party. Between 1868-1878, 1,400 black men held political office in the South, Mississippi and South Carolina had the most black men in office. By 1870, many black men had reached important positions in office, but not as high as governor.(Lecture 9/9/19) Evidently, black men had more freedom before women began their labor movements in the late 1800s, which eventually led them to create their own organizations and come up with other ways to reach their goal of better working conditions and better wages.

Black women became extremely powerful when they began to protest and strikes against the persons they worked for in search for a possible raise in their wages. In addition to protesting for their working conditions and a raise in their wages, they also protested against lynchings. The

Neighborhood Union was one of the many organizations, black women created to help their own communities live in better conditions and have access to the same services as white americans.

With the creation of this organization, we can see the strength these women had when they got together at the city-meetings to talk about what the next step would be in their process of changing the society they were living in. By creating the Washing Society, they demonstrate that doing their laundry or someone's laundry is not just a job, this has always been part of their culture, considering that as a woman they were expected to do laundry for their families.

Laundry is something that black women somehow connect to their traditions and culture, which is why I believed they were also protesting. For them, this wasn't just a job, it was something that they enjoyed doing as it has been part of their culture, however when they were exploited by white americans. That is when they realized they should be paid a decent amount for their hard work they do while doing someone's laundry which is something they only had to do for their families before.