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The Trap:

Black Itinerant Youth and the Carceral State in California, 1929- 1939

A master's thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in African American Studies

by

Justin J. Christopher

2016

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Black Youth and the Carceral State in California, 1929 - 1939

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Masters of Arts in African American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Robin Davis Gilbran Kelley, Committee Chair

James Smith was orphaned at 11 years of age when both his parents died. Soon after he began following harvest labor from Tennessee, throughout the U.S. South, and across the American West. Like many itinerant youth, James lived a precarious life hopping trains to search for work. His journey sheds light on the consequences of being a young Black male looking for work, particularly in Alabama and Texas where he was captured and imprisoned for vagrancy. After surviving “hard labor” in southern jails, James followed farm labor into California. At this time, the cotton industries in the southern Cotton Belt declined as the political economy of cotton production in California became a global commodity.

James arrived in California in the midst of the Great Depression, at a time when anti-vagrancy laws and border patrols were being strictly enforced due to the influx of indigent Southwestern migrants. Nearly everywhere James Smith looked for work, he was jailed. Seasonal harvest labor and racial hiring practices in California *trapped* James in a revolving door of short-term work and then punished him for being unemployed. Thus, *The Trap* maps the role of the carceral state in restricting the mobility and labor of Black itinerant laborers during a national economic crisis.

Throughout this study, the story of Black itinerant youth is unfolded to uncover the operation of agricultural capitalism, surplus labor, and imprisonment in California. Itinerant laborers were an excess labor force accessible when farm unions were on strike, yet neglected and subjected to exploitation in the private and public labor markets. The criminalization of unemployment funneled Black itinerant laborers into low wage work as a convenient, dispensable class of workers. Sometimes their labor was welcomed—other times, migrants were told “to disappear” or “float” out of regions. To survive, many committed non-violent, petty crimes to get by, which placed them in a never-ending cycle of incarceration and unfree labor. This thesis traces James’ work and carceral history over eleven years. By the age twenty-three, he was convicted of a petty theft crime and sentenced to serve five years to life in San Quentin state prison in California.

The thesis of Justin Christopher is approved.

Sarah Haley

Kathleen A. Lytle-Hernandez

Robin Davis Gilbran Kelley, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

Dedication Page

This thesis would not have been possible without the special support of friends, family, and a host of exceptional scholars and mentors. Nikki Taylor, my first academic mentor, motivated me to pursue graduate studies. The McNair Scholars program at the University of Cincinnati prepared me for graduate school and in-depth research.

While at UCLA, I was first introduced to historical research methods working under the guidance of Kelly Lytle-Hernandez on the Black Prisoner Project. I cannot thank her enough for her important role in the trajectory of this thesis. Lytle-Hernandez's research support shaped my writing practice in an academic form that allows me to honor the voices of the young men I write about. I would like to offer my deepest gratitude for my entire thesis committee. Sarah Haley provided critical support and helped me find the lost narratives in the archive. Robin D.G. Kelley pushed me to think critically about Black working class history and its relationship to this project.

The department of African American Studies has given me the greatest community and support network to succeed personally and academically. Teaching and working under the guidance of Laura Abrams, Josh Bloom, Kent Wong, Reverend James Lawson, Caroline Streeter and Bryonn Bain has helped me shape my research and teaching pedagogy. Cheryl Harris has been a great department chair. I would like to give a big shout out to Eboni Shaw for her critical behind the scene role in keeping me on the right academic track. I have benefited meaningfully from having a supportive department. The faculty and staff are forever family. Being from Cincinnati, Ohio, I found myself on the other side of the country in Los Angeles. Immediately, I was accepted with open arms.

I am forever indebted to the love and support from my wife, family, and friends: my mother Barbara Christopher, brothers, Brandon Cooper and Melvin Greene. Rest in heaven to my brother Andre Christopher and sister Latoya Cooper. My greatest support system is my daughter Aubrey and my beautiful wife Jasmine Phillips. Aubrey has changed my life in ways unimaginable. I am motivated daily through her. Jasmine is the greatest friend and partner possible. Thank you for providing critical support for this thesis project.

Last but not least, I am grateful beyond measure for James Smith and the other itinerant youth I have had the honor of writing about. I am hopeful that I have told their stories with dignity and respect for their journeys and resilience.

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Introduction: “One Way Ticket” to California and the Forgotten Narratives

I pick up my life
And take it on the train,
To Los Angeles, Bakersfield,
Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake
Any place that is
North and West,
And not South
I am fed up
With Jim Crow laws,
People who are cruel
And afraid,
Who lynch and run,
Who are scared of me
And me of them
I pick up my life
And take it away
On a one-way ticket--
Gone up North
Gone out West
Gone¹

By Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes’ poem, “One Way Ticket,” illustrates the factors leading to a Black exodus from the U.S South in search of freedom in the West and in the North. Although the vast majority of Black southern migrants moved north, between 1910 and 1920, as many as 470,000 African Americans headed westward.²

¹ Langston Hughes, “One Way Ticket” cited from http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/gmigration/Hughes_OneWayTicket.pdf.

² Wheeler, B. Gordon. *Black California: The History of African-Americans in the Golden State* (New York: Hippocrene, 1993), 199-200.

Black migrants to California arrived with middle class aspirations.³ Indeed, 36 percent of Black Angelenos owned their homes in 1910, in contrast to Northern and Midwestern cities where Black home ownership never exceeded 15 percent.⁴ The potential for upward mobility was promoted by Black elites. W.E.B. Du Bois, the founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), toured Texas, California, and parts of the Northwest Pacific.

In the *Crisis*, a Black owned national newspaper, Du Bois described Los Angeles as having “without doubt the most beautifully housed group of colored people in the United States.”⁵ Du Bois took pictures of homes, well-manicured lawns, and rows of palm trees. Similarly, in 1913, Hugh Macbeth, a recent Harvard law graduate at the time, wrote a letter to his wife referring to Los Angeles as the “city called heaven.”⁶

The 1910s marked a decade of steady Black migrations to California, particularly in Los Angeles, which became a hub of Black wealth in the American West with flourishing businesses and involvement in politics.⁷ However, growing political representation and home ownership did not rid Blacks of segregation similar to that experienced in the U.S South.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Flamming, Douglas. *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 50-51.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 222-223. With as many as 8,000 more Black people than Oakland and San Francisco combined, Black Los Angeles reflected a shift in community business and politics. In addition to the rise of the West’s largest Black business—The Golden State Mutual Insurance—Los Angeles’ Black community elected California’s first African American assemblyman Frederick M. Roberts.

Residential segregation in Los Angeles was made possible through racially restrictive covenants. In 1919, the Los Angeles Black community challenged housing apartheid before the California Supreme Court. In one of the first housing restriction decisions in the nation, *Los Angeles Investments Co. vs. Gary*, the court ruled that it was unconstitutional to deny property sales based on race. Nevertheless, the court maintained that it was constitutional to restrict nonwhites from occupying homes they purchased or received. In other words, the court ruled that Blacks could be banned from racially restricted areas—even if they rightfully owned property there.⁸

Unlike residential segregation in other cities in the U.S.,⁹ the “invisible walls of steel”¹⁰ that surrounded nonwhite communities in Los Angeles brought Blacks into close contact with ethnically diverse groups, such as Mexicans, Japanese, and Italians,¹¹ which complicated work opportunities.

⁸ Sides, Josh. *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 17-18.

⁹ Ibid. Josh Sides argues that residential segregation in Los Angeles differed from other American cities. Places like “Detroit, Cleveland, Harlem, Chicago, and Milwaukee developed black ghettos, neighborhoods where most people were black and where most black people in the city lived.”

¹⁰ Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 235.

¹¹ See Appendix 4 for Los Angeles demographics.

	1920	1920	1930	1930	1940	1940
	Black Pop	Total Pop.	Black Pop	Total Pop.	Black Pop.	Total pop.
Los Angeles	15,579	576,673	38,894	1,238,048	63,774	1,504,277
Oakland	5,489	216,261	7,503	284,063	8,462	302,163
San Francisco	2,414	506,676	3,803	634,394	4,846	634,536

Graph I.¹²

Economic hardship was a key driver of Black migration in the 1920s brought on by World War I. War industries drew thousands of skilled and semi-skilled workers to California as a booming industrial center. The war also stopped the influx of foreign unskilled laborers from Europe. In the halt of poor white workers, manufacturers turned to African Americans. “They sent labor agents into the south, where Black people readily responded to offers of a good job and free transportation.”¹³ The major industrial cities in California—San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles—absorbed majority of these southern migrants.

African American laborers poured into the Golden State looking for work but population increases and the halting of war contracts diminished employment opportunities. The low-

¹² Gibson, Cambell, and Kay Jung. "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States." February 2005. Accessed August 09, 2015. <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2005/demo/POP-twps0076.pdf?cssp=SERP>. See also Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), 223.

¹³ Gordon, *Black California*, 199-200.

skilled service jobs that remained were eventually given to whites first. The “city called heaven”¹⁴ shortly became more of a nightmare than a frontier escape.¹⁵

Racism in the work place prevented Blacks from obtaining employment other than menial labor. A survey conducted during the mid to late 1920s by Charles Johnson, an African American sociologist for the Urban League, exposed the prevalence of employment discrimination. Johnson surveyed 456, and interviewed 104, manufacturing firms in Los Angeles County to better understand employer and white worker attitudes toward different ethnic groups. Johnson found that many firms had never hired Blacks and over 30 stated that they would not hire Blacks under any conditions.”¹⁶

One furniture manufacture admitted to firing a Black employee of five years with an excellent track record because “[they] want[ed] a white man to have the job.”¹⁷ In Detroit, for example, Blacks were hired for automobile manufacturing jobs, but in Los Angeles Blacks were kept from the auto industry because “[white employers] prefer white labor in [their] line.”¹⁸

Thus, racism in the Los Angeles workforce resulted in competition between nonwhite groups *for* limited menial, low wage work. Because employers in California were not dependent on Black labor, unlike other areas in the country with less ethnic diversity, unemployment was chronic for Black workers. The Great Depression devastated Black communities in California as

¹⁴ Flamming, *Bound For Freedom*, 50-51.

¹⁵ Gordon, *Black California*, 199-200.

¹⁶ Sides, *L.A. City Limits*, 24-25. Cited from Charles S. Johnson, *Industrial Survey of the Negro Population of Los Angeles* (no publisher, 1926). See also Charles S. Johnson, “Negro Workers in Los Angeles Industries,” *Opportunity* 6 (August 1928)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

well as every other region in the country. “One in three Blacks in Los Angeles were out of work, while 18.1% of Blacks in San Francisco were unemployed.”¹⁹

Additionally, Blacks were refused membership in unions. In the early 1930s, the San Francisco chapter of the NAACP wrote, “Labor unionism had frozen the Negro out of all work in this section of the country.”²⁰ The crisis and white unionism left Blacks underemployed and unrepresented.

While pre-existing research offers a window into Black migrations westward, most scholars have only written about the middle and elite classes in California.²¹ Quintard Taylor’s seminal book, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, chronicles a history of urban California within the larger story of the Black West from the 16th through the 20th century.

Taylor deconstructs Frederick Jackson’s “frontier thesis,” where Jackson argues that the “frontier” was vital to the reinvention of American democracy through territorial conquest. In contrast, Taylor centers the significant contributions of Blacks in the social, cultural, and political formation of the American West.²² Taylor relies on a variety of sources, such as

¹⁹ Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 227-229.

²⁰ Broussard, Albert S. *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 48.

²¹ Bunch, Lonnie G. *Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles 1850-1950: June 11, 1988-March 6, 1989*. Los Angeles, Calif. (600 State Dr., Exposition Park, Los Angeles 90037): California Afro-American Museum, 1988. Taylor, Quintard. *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990*. (New York: Norton, 1998). Sides, Josh. *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Rhomberg, Chris. *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Flamming, Douglas. *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Hunt, Darnell M., and Ana-Christina Ramón. *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York, NY: Random House, 2010).

²² Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 18-19.

newspaper and magazine editorials, biographical stories, and the archival records of the NAACP.^{23 24}

Historian Josh Sides' book, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*, charts the struggles for Black equality in Los Angeles from the 1930s to the 1970s. He chronicles the Great Depression up through the Watts Riots and urban crises. Sides, examines the racial diversity that existed in Los Angeles as compared to predominately white and black neighborhoods in the urban North. He reveals the opportunities and limitations of L.A.'s diverse racial composition. Similar to other Historians mapping Black migration westward, Sides predominately uses archives from the *Crisis* magazine, the *California Eagle*, oral history transcripts, and NAACP records.

Douglas Flamming's book, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*, follows the migration stories of middle and upper class Blacks from the Jim Crow South to California from 1910 to World War II. "The main actors in this book are the community leaders who kept fighting for equal opportunity, and basic civil rights."²⁵ Douglass contends that, "[B]lack Los Angeles was predominately 'middle class.'"²⁶ The sources Flamming relied upon include books, articles, dissertations, and archival histories drawn from biographies, news editorials, and community meeting records to shed light on the push-pull factors of Black migrations and the conditions of early Black life in Los Angeles.

²³ For more information on black history in California See *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland* by Chris Rhomberg *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* by Albert S. Broussard.

²⁴ For more on Black Los Angeles, see Hunt, Darnell M., and Ana-Christina Ramón. *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities*.

²⁵ Flamming, *Bound For Freedom*, 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

None of the texts above adequately document the lives of the Black working poor and despite a substantive historical literature on rural labor in California, scarce resources provide a lens into the lives of Black itinerants—especially harvest laborers. Cletus E. Daniel’s 1981 publication, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-194*, is one of the earliest studies of migratory harvest workers in California. Daniels captures the rise of agricultural aspirations in California during the last quarter of the 19th century up to World War II.

Daniels tells the story of migrant laborers and organizing efforts in the harvest fields of California through the use of harvest journals, state agriculture reports, newspaper articles, and various secondary studies from the progressive era up to the Great Depression. Daniels writes of various groups of migrant workers from Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, and poor whites but rarely references Black itinerant laborers. Although *Bitter Harvest* mentions Blacks, there are no narratives within the text that provide a window into the lives of Black migrants in harvest labor.²⁷

Dark Sweat, White Gold is a history of cotton industries and migrant workers in California during the New Deal era. Devra Weber places the stories of migrant laborers in working class histories. Weber examines, “the development of the cotton industry, its work force, and its relations with the state in the years from 1919 to 1939.”²⁸ As cotton workers

²⁷ Daniel, Cletus E. *Bitter Harvest, a History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981). For more on migratory harvest labor see Taylor, Paul S. *On the Ground in the Thirties* (Salt Lake City: G.M. Smith, 1983). Street, Richard Steven. *Beast of the Field: Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1913* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

²⁸ Weber, Devra. *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 15. Accessed October 08, 2015. <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft5m3nb3d9;brand=ucpress>.

became the primary labor force in agriculture, the state's relation to finance capital and labor transformed the harvest fields in California.

Weber captures farm workers' resistance against the growing organized cotton industry following the New Deal Agriculture Adjustment Act through the 1930s. Weber primarily builds the story of migrant workers in the cotton valleys of California around newspaper archives and extensive oral histories of Mexicans and Anglo workers. Although Weber broadens the history of migratory laborers during the Great Depression, *Dark Sweat, White Gold* sheds little to no light on Black itinerants.²⁹

Histories of Black settlements in California typically center the experiences of the Black middle and elite classes. But there is no story centering the lived experience of poor migrant laborers. Similarly, historians of migratory labor in California show a limited picture of Blacks laboring in harvest fields, with none providing a thorough analysis of the Black migrant narrative. The voices of Black itinerant youth, in particular, are muted in Black migration stories and histories of migratory laborers in California during the Great Depression.

There are scant sources that magnify the voices of the Black poor and Black agricultural laborers. *The Trap* aims to rectify the absence of Black itinerant laborers and their narratives during the Great Depression, thereby broadening the Black migration story and the history of working class labor in California.

The archival sources historians have relied upon limit their focus. By using prison records, we can take a broader and more nuanced look at the Black migration history. Black itinerant workers were not climbing the social ladder—work was unsteady, prison was certain, and their lives difficult to document. The story of James Smith and other poor migrant laborers, when

²⁹ Ibid.

understood within the broader context of Black settlement in the American West, consequently complicates the discourse on Black migrations to, and Black experiences within, California.

This thesis examined approximately 50 inmate case files from San Quentin and Folsom prisons. Files were isolated to pull the cases of Black men who were incarcerated between 1930 and 1945. Furthermore, only 10% of such records remain. The archives only retained one out of every ten files during this period. Among the examined archives, approximately ten cases uncovered the particular experiences of black men who migrated to California as a youth. Meaning, approximately ten of the fifty files revealed men with carceral and working histories as teenagers. One man's story is emblematic of them all and will be centered throughout this thesis, while drawing supporting evidence from other files and secondary resources.

James Smith was born in 1915 in Nashville, Tennessee. By the age of 11, James Smith was on his own. Both his mother and father were dead and no family took him in. Following a path relatively few African Americans traveled, James worked the harvests into and across the American West.³⁰ For him, work was never steady. Migration was a means of survival and settlement was nearly impossible.³¹ The carceral archives conducted by probation officers, arrest records, and other sources reveal traces of James Smith's life.

The Trap is the first sustained effort to document the experiences of Black itinerant laborers in California during the interwar years. The nature of harvest labor required constant movement, limiting their ability to settle in an area like middle and upper class Blacks, which consequently impacted their eligibility for work relief. Additionally, it was difficult to survive without strong familial and social networks. Without employment or family to lean on, the

³⁰ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230. Department of Corrections. Office of Secretary of State. California State Archives, F3750: 636.

³¹ Ibid.

criminal justice system was the chief institution shaping their lives. As unemployed people with no place to go, Black itinerants were criminalized under anti-vagrancy laws and vulnerable to police harassment.

Nearly everywhere James Smith looked for work, he was jailed. Seasonal harvest labor and racial hiring practices in California *trapped* James in a revolving door of short-term work and then punished him for being unemployed. Thus, *The Trap* maps the role of the carceral state in restricting the mobility and labor of Black itinerant laborers during a national economic crisis.

Considering the intersections of race, labor, migration, and criminalization, the guiding question of this study is: How did the carceral system shape the experiences of black migrant laborers?

Chapter one contextualizes James' westward migration, detailing the decline of the cotton industries in the southern Cotton Belt and the rise of cotton production in the American West during the Great Depression. The political economy of agriculture and capital in California created a hierarchy of power over cotton production. New Deal relief policies benefited large growers and left farm workers defenseless. This chapter highlights the struggle between growers and farm workers over rights to collective bargaining and wages. The Great Depression and increasing migrations to California during this period resulted in a surplus labor population. Farm unions organized strikes and leveraged power over wages in a moment of big capital interests scrambling for cotton production for cheap wages.

At a time when families were devastated by the collapse of the American economy, the railway was the best way for itinerant laborers to find work. It is likely that James hopped trains to get from the South to California. Chapter 1, in addition, patches together the life of James along the railroad routes. Black itinerant youth experienced pervasive racism and police violence

at the hands of railway detectives and the Texas Rangers. Seeking work opportunities was dangerous and forced migrant youth to live precarious lives. James most likely picked cotton, worked on chain gangs, and searched for work in the South before making it to California.

The second chapter, *Walking Misdemeanor*, analyzes how, beginning in the 19th century, Anglo-settlers enacted vagrancy laws that criminalized underemployment, houselessness, and itinerancy, namely among racialized outsiders. It was difficult for all seasonal migrant workers—who didn't have homes or families—to avoid anti-vagrancy arrest for unemployment and lodging in public without visible means of living. Racism compounded the problem for non-white itinerants. Chapter two also explores the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) history of racial violence and profiling in LA County.

The final chapter, *Unauthorized Migrants: No Work, No Relief*, details how the trap forced James into unfree work in California. Against the backdrop of California's cotton industry and farm worker strikes, James' experience sheds light on the vulnerabilities of Black migrant workers in the agriculture sector. James searched for worked up and down the California harvest routes throughout the 1930s and was imprisoned nearly everywhere he searched for work. By the end of the decade, at age 23, James Smith was convicted of a burglary and sentenced to five years to life in San Quentin State prison in California.

Throughout *The Trap*, the story of black itinerant youth is unfolded to uncover the operation of agricultural capitalism, surplus labor, and imprisonment in California. Itinerant laborers were an excess labor force accessible when farm unions were on strike, yet neglected and subjected to exploitation in the private and public labor markets. The criminalization of unemployment funneled black itinerant laborers into low wage work as a convenient, dispensable class of workers. Sometimes their labor was welcomed—other times, migrants were

told “to disappear” or “float” out of regions. To survive, many committed non-violent, petty crimes to get by, which placed them in a never-ending cycle of incarceration and unfree labor.

Chapter 1. Fending for Themselves

Section I. Cotton Picking and The New Deal: Changing Political Economies

James’ history of migratory labor began in the Cotton Belt of the U.S. South. The long established Southeast Cotton Belt extended from the Carolinas through Texas. In the antebellum period, cotton production defined slavery, agriculture, and plantation capitalism. At the turn of the century, cotton acreage decreased in most of the Southeast region, except near the Mississippi River.³² During this time, cotton production in the American West was expanding into a new political economy.

By the 1920s, cotton production surged in the Southwest. From Oklahoma and Texas to the cotton regions of Arizona and California. Expansive farm enterprises mechanized cotton as tractors became accessible.³³ In California, cotton dominated primarily in the southern region from Riverside to the Imperial Valley.³⁴ The Imperial Valley was a center for cotton production during the first decades of the 20th century. Mexican workers, who were often disposable and had easy access on both sides of the border, held most of the agriculture jobs. The federal government played a huge role in facilitating the rise of cotton production in California in the 1920s.

World War I resulted in a scramble for the most profitable cotton strands. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) empowered the political cotton economy in California

³² Holley, Donald. *The Second Great Emancipation: The Mechanical Cotton Picker, Black Migration, and How They Shaped the Modern South* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2000), 15.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 18.

and led the establishment of specialized varieties of cotton. “The USDA sent W.B. Camp to the San Joaquin Valley to test new strains of cotton...in an effort to develop new cotton sources for manufacturing airplane wings and tires.”³⁵ The Acala strain was introduced as a superior classification of cotton and demanded “two to five cents higher per pound than the market average.”³⁶ By 1924, the San Joaquin Valley became a booming region for cotton production with lucrative prices almost triple the national average.³⁷ The introduction of the One Variety Act the next year, supported by large groups of capitalists, such as W.B. Camp and the Bank of America, monopolized cotton production in the state as Acala was the only approved strand in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valley.³⁸

In contrast, during this time until the Great Depression, the overproduction of cotton in the U.S south contributed to the worst economic crisis in the history of the region. Nearly every year of the decade following the First World War, cotton prices declined in the southern Cotton Belt. The depression years followed the same trajectory of reduced demand and over production in the Cotton Belt.³⁹ The Acala strain however, was in global demand.

As cotton prices plummeted, the American cotton economies were met with stiff competition from international markets. Synthetic fabrics were manufactured in countries such as

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 31.

³⁹ Holley, *The Second Great Emancipation*, 57.

Egypt, India, and China. As prices for certain cotton strands dropped, the United States began losing shares of the international cotton market.⁴⁰

The federal government introduced a series of programs to help the depressed cotton economy.⁴¹ “The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) loaned money to farmers who were drought stricken and offered a few of them a chance to buy small farms.”⁴² As cotton reserves increased, the federal government instituted an agricultural recovery program.

In 1933, Congress passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) as an emergency measure to increase farmers’ cotton prices. The Act led to the destruction of 10 million acres of cotton. The goal was to suppress one fourth of cotton production to create a scarcity in the world market.⁴³ The AAA was not successful in controlling the surplus cotton production in the southern Cotton Belt, even in the Mississippi River Delta.⁴⁴ However, California cotton production saw immediate benefits.

Cotton prices in California increased by 70 percent at one point during the Depression.⁴⁵ Finance capital enabled big banks, such as Bank of America, to loan money to large growers. Large investors scurried to “buy land and gins at depression prices.”⁴⁶ Over the next five years, the cotton industry widened the disparity between large and small growers. The AAA mostly

⁴⁰ Ibid., 55-56.

⁴¹ Ibid., 58-59.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁵ Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 115.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 116.

benefited a small number of large growers backed by capital improvement loans. Small growers were left out on a limb and many had to sell their land.⁴⁷ The New Deal relief policies helped large growers, but left farm workers completely vulnerable to the economic crisis.

With large investment in the cotton industry, the economic and political power of organized agriculture flourished. Franklin D. Roosevelt campaigned on what became the AAA. Their power was wielded to strongly oppose legislation that would provide relief to farm workers. The FDA hesitated to oppose the position of organized agriculture and the people most impacted rarely had an opportunity to voice their opinions:

[C]otton workers were excluded from social and labor legislation which might have supported their right to collective bargaining or given them access to social Insurance. Recognized as welfare recipients, farm laborers were ignored as workers and effectively excluded from protective legislation and recognition of their right to collective bargaining. That exclusion and the institutionalization of cotton workers' position as low-paid workers placed them at a great disadvantage in relation to the industry and became integral to the expansion of California's cotton industry.⁴⁸

Despite the difficulties of obtaining federal relief, farm strikes put pressure on the federal government to include farm workers in New Deal legislation.

As many as 7,000 allied cotton workers joined the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) union by 1937.⁴⁹ As cotton prices dropped during the harvest,

[t]he availability of relief and expansion of cotton acreage reduced the size of the labor pool relative to the increased demand for labor. With an estimated 75,000 experienced workers needed for the harvest, growers felt the labor pool was too small to ensure customary low wages.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 165.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Growers paid \$1.00 per hundred pounds in 1936 and just a year later, the Agriculture Labor Bureau settled on a 90 cents wage. The decrease in wage caused problems for growers as cotton workers refused to accept less than \$1.00 per hundred pounds.⁵¹

The farm union strikes and labor shortage forced growers to compete for workers. Growers began harvesting with smaller crews of farm workers. Migratory, destitute workers were not residents of the state, therefore ineligible for relief aid, and less likely to turn down lower wages.⁵² The farm union was able to leverage control by negotiating with growers for the \$1.00 wage rate.

In 1938, Congress stepped back in to introduce the second Agricultural Adjustment Act, which pressured growers to reduce nearly fifty percent of cotton acreage.⁵³ With the Central Valley overcrowded with unemployed workers, "relief again became the central issue, extending into a struggle over wages during the harvest. In August the Agricultural Labor Bureau slashed wages by 25 c[ents], offering only 75 c[ents] to pick 100 pounds of cotton."⁵⁴ The union wins over relief aid assisted unemployed farm workers.⁵⁵

The organized cotton industry protested relief efforts that provided support to strikers and unemployed residents. Farm workers and organized labor could not settle on wages leading to another strike in the Valley in 1938. During this time, growers were now only offering seventy-

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 180-181.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

five cents per hundred pounds. The farm union advocated for a twenty-five cent increase and the Agricultural Labor Bureau refused to honor it. In response, as many as 300 cotton workers went on strike and walked off a ranch.⁵⁶ Migrant laborers were particularly vulnerable as the battle between growers and farm workers intensified. James Smith last worked in the Central Valley in 1938.⁵⁷

Section II. Hope and Despair: Following the Harvest Young

“I got homesick many nights as I lay in the total darkness of a big empty barn. Sometimes I lay crying, but then I would see myself and say, I will go on.”⁵⁸

An estimated 250,000 under aged youth were living on the road at the height of the Great Depression. The economic crisis destroyed many of their families. Similar to adults who roamed the country looking for work and a better life, these teenagers struggled to survive and were forced to fend for themselves.⁵⁹ The journey of James Smith provides a window into the experiences black youth may have encountered following the harvest and hopping trains in the Depression.

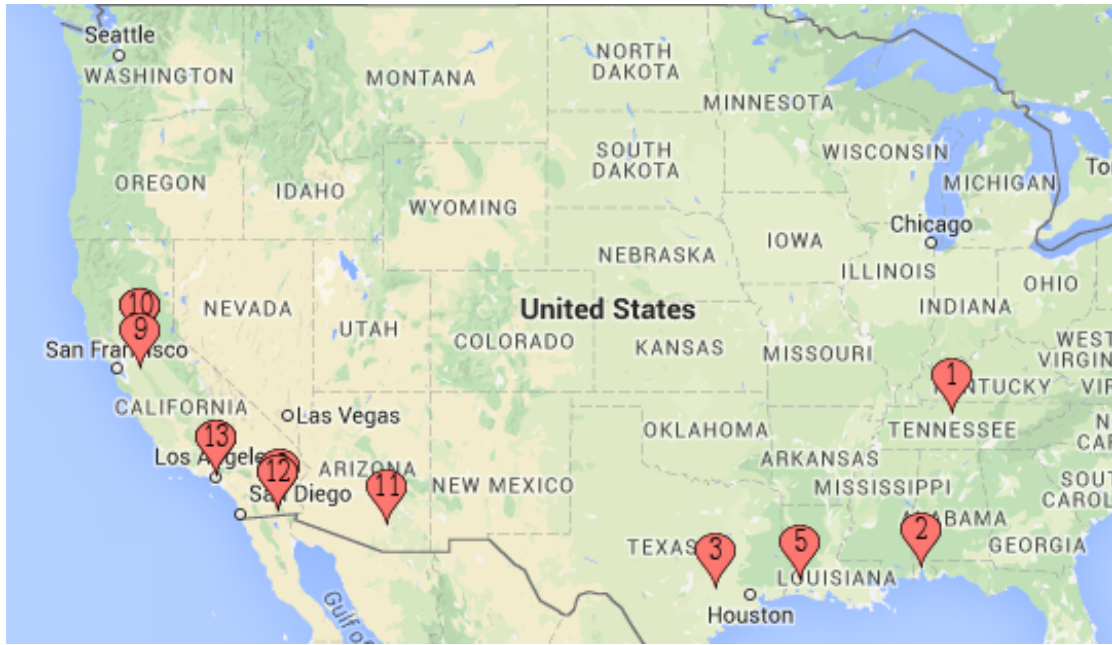
The particulars of James’ migration are unknown. Even though he did not record his experiences on the road, other youth did. Their testimonies detail the dangers and struggles faced while jumping trains in search of work. James likely rode the Southern Pacific railway on the El Paso, Texas route according to his migration pattern documented on the following map.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

⁵⁸ Uys, Errol Lincoln. *Riding the Rails: Teenagers on the Move in the Great Depression* (Boston: T.E. Winter & Sons, 2014), 136.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,11.



⁶⁰ Map I.

By the time James began his journey in 1927, the Southern Pacific railroad had constructed routes from Louisiana to California. The train routes stretched through Lake Charles, Louisiana; La Grange, Texas; Tucson, Arizona, and as far as Northern California. Various routes traveled through Imperial Valley, Los Angeles, Fresno, the San Joaquin Valley, and Sacramento.⁶¹ James resided in each of these cities at some point. Like many youth, James most likely did not have money and jumped railways instead of paying his fare—which was a risky process.

In order to hop trains, balance was key to avoid falling under train wheels. Getting off trains was equally dangerous. According to one teen in the 1930s, “you had to jump off at the

⁶⁰ This map reveals the cities with archival traces of James Smith life.

⁶¹ Heath, Erle, and Bruce C. Cooper. "Seventy-Five Years of Progress - The Southern Pacific Railroad (1869-1944)." *Seventy-Five Years of Progress - The Southern Pacific Railroad (1869-1944)*. 1999-2014. Accessed May 17, 2016. http://www.cpr.org/Museum/SP_1869-1944/.

right time too ‘cause once the train picked up speed you had a hard time getting off.’⁶² Indeed, they risked life and limb each time yet these risky circumstances were necessary for survival as a prerequisite to pursuing farm work in different regions.

Jumping a train with empty boxcars was the safest option. When cargo is involved the threat of injury and unsanitary conditions were enhanced. The “hog cars were less noisy, but the railroad didn’t clean them and they stank.”⁶³ If youth couldn’t find an unlocked boxcar, they were forced to ride on the top of trains. Riding on top of trains was particularly dangerous, especially through tunnels for miles “with choking black smoke and cinders everywhere.”⁶⁴ Unpredictable fumes, debris, and weather conditions was a constant health hazard.

The possibility of falling off a train was a grave reality. Many youth document their experiences traveling. One youth in particular recalls a painful memory of another young boy falling off of the train while leaving out of Texas. Rain was pouring heavily and as they struggled to hold on, one boy lost his balance and fell beneath the train. “I later heard that [his] body was found and he was cut up in such a condition that his remains were picked up in a bushel.”⁶⁵

Willard Berg, a white youth who hopped trains recalled his first introduction to the problems facing black itinerant youth. He met a black teenager with an old, ripped piece of shirt around his forearm as a result of an injury from riding the trains. During a conversation, the

⁶² Uys, *Riding the Rails*, 133. Clarence Lee, Interview transcript, April 6, 1994.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 202. Clydia Williams, interview transcript, March 27, 1994. Williams, letter to AHP, December 1993 (NM).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶⁵ Online archive transcript quoted from <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

black teen told Willard “his arm had been scalded by steam deliberately spewed out as he was passing a switch engine.”⁶⁶ After Willard helped him clean his arm with vaseline, the young man stated, “I’ve got an ugly spot on my head too.” Revealing the scars, “Two square inches of skull was exposed between a matting of hair. How did this happen? [Willard] asked. ‘I was standing on a car looking the wrong way when the train went under an overpass and I didn’t duck in time.’”⁶⁷

In addition to the threat of being seriously injured on the trains, itinerants were often half clothed along the way. The poverty and deprivation of the Great Depression was detrimental to itinerant youth. Clydia Williams, a seven-year old black girl rode the rails with two of her cousins. Clydia’s two male cousins were eight and ten years of age. “The trio roamed Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arizona, and California...following the cotton and fruit Harvest.”⁶⁸ Life on the road meant going days and weeks wearing the same clothes and shoes, or worse, not having any. Clydia and her cousins “were dirty, our hair was full of lice, our scalps itched. Almost everybody was barefoot.”⁶⁹ Without money, itinerant youth had no other choice but to survive the best way they could. One black youth itinerant wrote, “you wanted to buy a pair of pants or some shoes but you had nothing. I found a shoe and a boot and I wore them so long others nicknamed me ‘Shoebot.’”⁷⁰ Clothing and shoes were not the only things youth went without. Food and water were also scarce.

⁶⁶ Uys, *Riding the Rails*, 115-116.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

Finding food was a constant struggle for young black itinerants. “Practically everybody I met was hungry,”⁷¹ explained Clarence Lee, another black youth traveling along the harvest route. “I saw little children with bloated stomachs like those you see over in Africa.”⁷² Starvation often sent itinerant youth searching for leftovers in dumpsters and in orchards.

As Clydia explained:

We would stop by people’s orchards to get something to eat. When we came to a town, we went to the back of hotels near the railroad yard and looked for food in garbage cans. We broke open crates and stole fresh fruit and vegetables at produce markets. We lifted milk and other items off delivery wagons...we didn’t steal to sell for profit. We took only what we needed to survive.⁷³

Clarence stated that while back at home, “I always had something to eat. Now I had nothing. There came a time when a piece of bread meant a lot to eat.”⁷⁴

The lack of food, employment, and the risks of travel took its toll on their dignity and sense of belonging. Clarence stated “being on the road was a destructive experience for me. When I was riding the rails, I didn’t feel like an American citizen. I felt like an outcast. I wasn’t treated like a human being. I was nothing but dirt as far as whites were concerned.”⁷⁵

The racism they faced was a constant. Clydia witnessed Jim Crow first hand. “Every town I went to had some sort of sign that you weren’t welcome.”⁷⁶ Although white hobos faced

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.,202.

⁷⁴ Ibid.,134.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.,202.

harsh times and abuse, according to Clydia, when you reached certain towns, “If you were black, they sure knew you didn’t belong there.”⁷⁷

Racist social practices impacted how white itinerants interacted with black itinerants. White youth were well aware of the dangers of breaking Jim Crow norms. As Lloyd Veitch, another white youth traveling during this time, explained, “We whites didn’t mix with blacks. We kept to whites because we never knew what the railroad men [such as brakemen, workers, and railroad detectives] would do to the blacks and any whites with them. The railroad men were harsher with blacks than they were with us whites.”⁷⁸

Racial violence was present and life threatening for black itinerants. Another boxcar youth rode the trains with a friend during the 1930s and described his experience on a train with twenty whites and one black youth. He heard brutal screams coming from the back of the boxcar.

It was the black boy crying for Mercy...Screams mixed with coarse laughter went on hour after hour. Around dawn the boy suddenly ran from the back of the car, pushed past us, and leaped from the moving train. We never knew if he lived or died nor what indescribable horror he was fleeing.⁷⁹

The potential violence was even more pervasive for black youth traveling alone.

Clarence Lee also experienced white mob violence while riding a train into Louisiana. A rape allegedly took place in the town adjacent to where his train was heading. For his protection, the trainmen pulled Clarence off the train when news of the rape broke. They knew he could not have committed the rape but would be blamed anyway because, as stated by Clarence, “In those

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Lloyd Veitch online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

⁷⁹ Uys, *Riding the Rails*, 114.

days it wasn't a crime for whites to kill a black. Just another dead black.”⁸⁰ A reported 1,800 or more extra-judicial lynchings took place in the leading cotton states (Louisiana, Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi, and South Carolina)⁸¹ which complicated journeying through the South for work.

Section III. Forced Labor: Chain Gangs and The New South

Slavery was abolished with the passage of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”⁸² The exception empowered new systems of labor control to reconstitute the New South and force blacks into coerced unpaid labor. As soon as Andrew Johnson became President after Lincoln’s assassination, he implemented his own plan for reconstructing the nation. His policies restored most former Confederates to state and local power.

The 13th amendment’s exception empowered Southern legislators to create Black Codes, which were laws intended to control the movement and limit the rights of newly freed people.⁸³ Black Codes included “vagrancy laws, laws prohibiting workers from breaking their contracts, regulating employment agencies, [and] holding ‘minors’ on plantations as ‘apprentices.’”⁸⁴ The development of new labor relations in harvest work was established through various forms, such

⁸⁰ Clarence Lee online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

⁸¹ Holley, *The Second Emancipation*, 26.

⁸² 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

⁸³ Wilson, Walter. *Forced Labor in the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1933), 85.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

as sharecropping and debt peonage. “In the agricultural sector of the postbellum South the most notorious ‘hybrid form’ of course was sharecropping.”⁸⁵

James Smith was employed in “seasonal jobs only.”⁸⁶ Seeking employment and laboring on farms was dangerous and hard labor. A constant “fear was being shot by a farmer who didn’t want me on his land. If dark hits and you were on their property, they might just shoot you.”⁸⁷ Violence at the hands of whites was widely practiced in the southern Cotton Belt regions. The yearly cycles of cotton consisted of three periods of labor. The seasonal labor force began by “plowing in the spring, thinning and weeding in the summer, and picking in the fall.”⁸⁸ The worst aspect was picking through the sharp thorns with their hands. One worker sadly recalls, “my back began to ache in about thirty minutes. My fingers hurt with pricks and scratches from cotton burrs.”⁸⁹ Additionally, if jobs came with room and board, growers would institute pay deductions, leaving itinerants with no pay. Many would be forced to sleep in a “barn with mules and hay”⁹⁰ just to have a job. “If you got to their place before dark, they might let you sleep in their barn or just tell you to keep on down the road.”⁹¹

Approaching farmers for work was particularly difficult for black youth. “If the color of your skin was white you fared better. If it was black you didn’t fare too well.” Clarence recalled stopping in a town one evening and a farmer allowing him to sleep in a barn to work in the

⁸⁵ Lichtenstein, Alexander C. *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (London: Verso, 1996), 11.

⁸⁶ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

⁸⁷ Uys, *Riding the Rail*, 135.

⁸⁸ Holley, *The Second Great Emancipation*, 5.

⁸⁹ Uys, *Riding the Rail*, 226.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*.

morning. After one days work, he was told “Ok boy, here’s your pay, take it and be on your way.”⁹² It was challenging to get by with only one days worth of work. However, it was better than nothing.

A former boxcar youth, recalled his life as a “young tramp” on the rails traveling South to West from age 15 to 18 during the Depression. In the South between “Mississippi-Georgia-Alabama area to Texas,” sheriffs captured and forced itinerants to work on local farms whenever cheap labor was needed. He noted, the “forced cotton” farms were “usually owned by the country sheriff.”⁹³ The legacy of slavery and forced labor reappeared even more directly in the form of chain gangs and convict leasing.⁹⁴

In Slavery By Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II, Douglass Blackmon argues that convict leasing was purposely orchestrated by reconfigured southern judicial systems as a way of coercing African Americans to comply with the social customs and labor demands of whites. James Smith travelled from Tennessee to Alabama and through Louisiana to Texas looking for farm labor.

James’ first recorded interaction with police began when he was sixteen years old. In 1932, Mobile, Alabama police arrested James and charged him with vagrancy. While in an

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Glenland Spencer online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

⁹⁴ For more on convict leasing see Haley, Sarah. *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016). LeFlouria, Talitha L. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (S.I.: Univ Of North Carolina Pr, 2016). Childs, Dennis. *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015). Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). Oshinsky, David M. *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1996). Mancini, Matthew J. *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).

Alabama jail he was forced to serve “Five days hard labor.”⁹⁵ Douglass Blackmon details the vulnerabilities of black men in Alabama:

A black man traveling alone in Alabama could be arrested and charged with vagrancy on almost any pretense. To have no money in hand demonstrated his guilt without question and, worse, was seen as absolute proof of his worthlessness. Almost every possible consequence of admitting indigence or joblessness—much less of having ridden for free on a freight train—was terrible.⁹⁶

During this time, hard labor meant convict leasing and/or forced labor on chain gangs. Most likely, James did his time on an Alabama chain gang. After surviving “hard labor” in an Alabama jail, James headed west to Texas.

Section IV. “Well, someone hit me”: Violence at the Hands of Texas Rangers

“In a little Texas town the train was stopped in a ‘cut’ with no chance to escape. Texas Rangers came down both sides of the train picking us off. We were herded into a circle and while flashlights beamed in our eyes they took every dime from each of us at gunpoint. One of the group was a black, and they made him run first. He ran into a ditch with two feet of water in it, and a fence. I heard him floundering around and I ran at right angles. Earlier a ranger had struck the same little black boy in the head with his pistol and the blood flowed freely. When he started to cry (he wasn’t over 12) the ranger asked him why he was crying, and when he said: ‘you hit me’ the brave Ranger said: ‘Who hit you?’ and the answer was: ‘We’ll, someone hit me.’”⁹⁷

In 1932, James was again arrested for vagrancy in La Grange, Texas, but there was “no disposition shown” in his case.⁹⁸ “To discourage [itinerants] the railroads had an arrangement

⁹⁵ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

⁹⁶ Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 124.

⁹⁷ Harry Christian online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

⁹⁸ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

with various small towns in Texas to jail vagrants caught riding the rails.”⁹⁹ Glenand Spencer’s account in Texas provides potential context for James’ arrest in Texas. When James was unable to find work, he would have jumped trains from city to city looking for work. Glenand writes of Texas,

Trains were allowed to fill up with hobos and then stopped at some prearranged point outside of the town. The sheriffs men would help the railroad men round up the hobos; the able-bodied men were then arrested, charged with vagrancy or some violation of railroad law, and sentenced to a ‘work furlough’—usually 30 to 60 days on what we called the cotton farm.¹⁰⁰

Following his time in Texas, there is no record of James’ whereabouts for two years.

Walter Miletich, a white itinerant who was charged with vagrancy in Texas and forced to work on chain gangs by the sheriffs and “railroad bulls,” stated, “I did 60 days on a chain gang in Texas for vagrancy. You couldn't have stood six days.”¹⁰¹ It is possible that James suffered the same treatment or worse given that he was black and all accounts indicate disparate treatment. Once a job was over, itinerant laborers would have to find their way out of town as soon as possible or risk arrest for vagrancy and forced labor in chains.

Police and railroad men worked together to criminalize itinerancy; it was difficult remaining free while looking for work. Simply walking somewhere could result in a misdemeanor vagrancy charge. Even after getting out of jail, vagrancy charges and jumping trains were revolving doors. Thus, James was trapped in a precarious system of where his labor

⁹⁹ Harry Christian online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Glenand Spencer online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

¹⁰¹ W.I. (Bill) Smith online transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

was exploited and where he was vulnerable to violence. In Texas in particular, Texas Rangers and vigilantes were notorious for abusing itinerants.¹⁰²

“Texas Slim”, “Big Red,” and “Denver Bob” were known by many of the youth that hopped trains. Texas Slim frequently would shoot at people riding the freights. He was rumored to have killed seventeen people. In route to California looking for work, Bob Chaney and five of other boxcar youth ran into Texas Slim. “We had started to hop a freight when we heard someone shout, ‘Hey, you ‘bo’s! It was Texas Slim, all six feet seven inches of him, waving two six-guns at us. You never saw six men scatter so fast when he began shooting those guns.”¹⁰³ Another boxcar youth witnessed Denver Bob shoot a man for climbing a boxcar ladder.¹⁰⁴ “Denver Bob was reputed to have shoved trespassers beneath the wheels of moving trains.”¹⁰⁵

The Texas Rangers themselves dealt some of the most brutal blows to black youth caught jumping or riding trains in Texas. A former boxcar rider recalled in 1934 being caught in a boxcar that was raided by Texas Rangers. He was shocked to witness the Texas Rangers violently abuse a young black boy no older than twelve years old, often more than once per day resulting in blood flowing out of his head.¹⁰⁶ These incidents were frequent and could have very much been the experience of James Smith as he traveled through Texas.

¹⁰² For more on the Texas Rangers see Paredes, Américo. *"With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958).

¹⁰³ Uys, *Riding the Rails*, 118-119.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹⁰⁶ Harry Christian, letter to AHP, October 1992 (CA). Online archive transcript quoted from <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

Chapter 2. Walking Misdemeanor: The Criminalization of Unemployment

*"[A]nyone wandering about the State without visible means of support is a vagrant and guilty of a misdemeanor"*¹⁰⁷

-L.A.P.D Deputy Chief Cross -1936-

Section I. Anglo-American Settlers: Caging Undesirables

Anglo-American settlers adopted harsh anti-vagrancy laws in California immediately upon entering the United States union. The first such law "An Act For the Government and Protection of Indians," specifically targeted California Indians. County officials captured unemployed Indians and were permitted to "hire out such a vagrant within twenty-four hours to the best bidder."¹⁰⁸ The Indian laws legitimized Anglo settler dominance and facilitated the caging and forced removal of Indians from native lands. The imprisonment and leasing of Indians for sale set the precedent for using law and order as a tool for social control and subjugation of undesired people in California. Indian children were kidnapped and sold to Anglo-Americans. A study on the early California laws and policies related to California Indians reveals, "It has been the custom of certain disreputable persons to steal away young Indian boys and girls, and carry them off and sell them to white folks for whatever they could get."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ "Vagrants Rounded Up in City and County: Police and Sheriff Open Drive to Supplement Border Patrol Halting of Indigents." *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), February 07, 1936. Accessed February 03, 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/164570585/5C3BA48007EE4FF0PQ/1?accountid=14512>

¹⁰⁸ Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly, and John L. Burton. *Early California Laws and Policies Related to California Indians* (Sacramento, CA: California State Library, California Research Bureau, 2002), 8. Accessed February 10, 2016. http://deltarevision.com/2009_even_more_docs/early_ca_water_law.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*,10.

The second such law was the 1855 Greaser Act. The legislation was aimed at Mexicans.¹¹⁰ Under this law, vagrants were considered any person "commonly known as 'Greasers' or the issue of Spanish or Indian blood... who go armed and are not peaceable and quiet persons."¹¹¹

The third law, passed in 1872, defined a sweeping category of behaviors, practices, and conditions as acts of vagrancy and thereby illegal.¹¹² The first three statutes defined a vagrant to be:

1. Every person (except a California Indian) without visible means of living who has the physical ability to work, and who does not seek employment, nor labor when offered him.
2. Every beggar who solicits alms as a business
3. Every person who roams from place to place without any lawful business.¹¹³

Migrant laborers were typically always without visible means of living since they constantly traveled for work. Itinerants had to constantly avoid police because unemployment was a misdemeanor. Thus, the very nature of being an itinerant was criminalized since being a vagrant included roaming place to place. Vagrancy statutes served as an impediment to work.

Itinerants were also denied access to public spaces if they had “ no visible or lawful means of support, when found loitering around any steamboat landing, railroad depot, banking institution, broker's office, place of amusement, auction room, store, show or crowded

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹¹¹ Hernández, Kelly Lytle. "Hobos in Heaven." *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (2014): 4133. doi:10.1525/phr.2014.83.3.410.

¹¹² Sherry, Arthur H. "Vagrants, Rogues and Vagabonds. Old Concepts in Need of Revision." *California Law Review* 48, no. 4 (1960): 562. Accessed January 12, 2016. doi:10.2307/3478590.

¹¹³ Ibid.

thoroughfare, car, or omnibus, or any public gathering or assemble.”¹¹⁴ The dangers of being caught in public spaces or near railroad depots restricted their individual freedoms to be in certain locations.

The sixth and seventh category of vagrancy had a direct impact on itinerants—who were likely houseless. It was nearly impossible to be an itinerant under this law.

6. Every person who wanders about the streets at late or unusual hour of the night, without any visible or lawful business
7. Every person who lodges in any barn, shed, shop outhouse, vessel, or place other than such as is kept for lodging purposes, without permission of the owner or party entitled to the possession, thereof.¹¹⁵

These laws forced migrants to live on the streets since particular areas were statutorily off limits. With lodging in a barn or other areas punishable by law, migrant laborers were vulnerable to arrest if an employer did not offer them housing. If they were out of work and out of money, they could be easily imprisoned for not having a place to live. Anyone who violated one or more of the twelve categories of the law was defined a “vagrant, and is punishable by a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by not such fine and imprisonment.”¹¹⁶

By the first decade of the twentieth century, Los Angeles County used old provisions of convict labor laws and anti-vagrancy statues to capture and force undesirable poor white itinerants to labor on chain gangs. Under the fear of a “tramp panic,” the County jail in Los Angeles increasingly overcrowded year after year due to extreme policing of white itinerants.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Lytle-Hernández, "Hobos in Heaven," 410.

“Upon conviction for a misdemeanor within Los Angeles County, all convicts in the jails of Los Angeles were subject to forced labor" on chain gangs. Prisoners labored on "the streets, alleys and other places, either public or private. "¹¹⁸ These ordinances created a stronghold on the West’s itinerants workers.

In a 1907 California Supreme Court case, *People v. Craig*, Los Angeles police officers arrested two men for committing a crime the officers had not witnessed. The officers jailed them as vagrants, known to be such. “Well, the only thing we can do--we didn't see it--we will go and vag [sic] them.”¹¹⁹ Since the men were known to the arresting officers as unemployed, the courts held that they had indeed committed vagrancy in the presence of the officer. The court stated, “vagrancy differs from most offenses in the fact that it is chronic rather than acute, that it continues after it is complete, and thereby subjects the offender to arrest any time before he reforms.”¹²⁰ or gets a job and settles down. In other words, vagrancy operated as a continuing offense and people who had prior vagrancy arrests could be subjected to future arrests simply because they were “known” or profiled as such.

Section II. Strict Enforcement of Vagrancy Laws: Confronting the “Okie” Threat

SUBREGION	NUMBER	PERCENT
Los Angeles Area	95,062	38.1
San Joaquin Valley	70,633	28.0
San Francisco Bay Area	23,107	9.2

¹¹⁸ Ibid.,437.

¹¹⁹ Lacey, Forrest W. "Vagrancy and Other Crimes of Personal Condition." *Harvard Law Review* 66, no. 7 (1953): 1210. Accessed February 04, 2016. doi:10.2307/1336937.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

San Bernardino/Imperial Valley	20,272	8.0
Central Coast	11,291	4.5
San Diego Area	10,762	4.3
Sacramento Valley	10,130	4.0
Sierra Nevada	6,623	2.6
North Coast	3,076	1.2
•	251, 956	99.9

Graph II. Migrant Destinations 1935-1940¹²¹

The Great Depression pressured hundreds of thousands of transients from the South West to relocate to California. The migrant crisis occurred in two phases. Southwesterners came in the second stage. Los Angeles established the first major “anti-migrant campaign” in the 1930’s.¹²² Los Angeles absorbed a large portion of the nations unemployed migrants. Between 1935 and 1940 as many as 96,000 migrants came to the Los Angeles area.¹²³ As anxiety increased in the state, Los Angeles “declared ‘war’ on the ‘indigent influx’ and demanded state intervention to stem the flow.”¹²⁴ The Los Angeles Police Chief planned and fiercely executed border patrols.

¹²¹ Residents in 1940 of Southwesterners moving to California, 1935-1940. Data from Donald J. Bogue, Henry S. Shryock, and Siegfried A. Hoerman, *Subregional Migration in the United States, 1935-1940*, Vol. 1, table 1. Cited from *American Exodus: The Dustbowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*, 41.

¹²² Gregory, James N. *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 80.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

To confront the “Okie” threat, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) doubled down on anti-vagrancy legislations and law enforcement. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter to Governor James Rolph addressing the situation.¹²⁵ Within the next month, in a meeting with Rolph, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce told the Governor "a real emergency exist. From Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona, vagrants are pouring into Los Angeles at the rate of 1200 a day." The proclamation issued by Rolph proposed that “Unemployed ‘drifters’ pouring into California by the thousands every day from other States will be met at the border with vagrancy arrests and sentences to serve on rock piles and road construction work near the snow lines of the mountain.”¹²⁶

The State Director of Finance, Rolland H. Vandergrift announced the plans for the concentration camps noting, " [vagrants] will be housed and fed but will receive no pay and will be worked hard."¹²⁷ The next week, Vandergrift stated “those who refuse to labor face vagrancy charges.”¹²⁸ Under the threat of imprisonment, Los Angeles Police Chief James E. Davis intensified border patrols, vagrancy police squads, and state blockades.

¹²⁵ "VAGRANCY ACTION ASKED: Peace Officers Told Strict Law Enforcement Needed; "Floaters" Make Heavy Calls on Charity." *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), October 7, 1931: A1. Accessed December 19, 2015. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/162451923/7AD826B60CB54ED8PQ/1?accountid=14512>.

¹²⁶ "VAGRANTS TO SWEAT: Rock Piles Await Drifting Horde Arrests at Border Planned to Check Invasion by Idle Thousands Governor's Proclamation at Bay City Conference Airs Program" *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), November 24, 1931: 1. Accessed November 08, 2015. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/162535435/8CE5F627F1CC42E2PQ/1?accountid=14512>.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ "FIRST CAMP FOR JOBLESS OPENS: Work Will Be Provided for 15,000 Nonresidents Board and Shelter, but No Pay Will Be Given Those Refusing to Labor Face Vagrancy Charges." *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), December 01, 1931: 6. Accessed January 09, 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/162505256/7390D892645F49C3PQ/1?accountid=14512>.

The Federal Transient Services released a statement—“Jobless Warned to Stay Away From California.”¹²⁹ The “bum blockades” led by Police Chief Davis and his famous red squad was met with resistance from local critics and leaders from border states. Even with open backlash from Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon, Chief Davis moved forward deploying “136 city police officers.”¹³⁰ that succeeded in halting hundreds of migrants at one border port.

Mayor Shaw argued that other cities and states along the route to California prohibited transients from leaving trains in their jurisdictions, preferring indigents arrive in Los Angeles.¹³¹ Arizona Governor B.B. Mauer declared, “what the Los Angeles police are trying to do is unconstitutional...they are simply trying to scare travelers away by threats of fingerprinting.”¹³² Chief Davis defended his Los Angeles border block plan by claiming that 65 to 85 percent of migrants came to Southern California and that fingerprinting of vagrants revealed that around 60% had criminal records. Davis followed, “If we remember that to obtain Government work one must have been a resident in the State at least a year, it can be readily seen that the hordes of indigents are not coming to California for work. They are coming to get on relief rolls, to beg and to steal.”¹³³

¹²⁹ Benedict, Laurence M. "JOBLESS WARNED TO STAY AWAY FROM CALIFORNIA: President's National Organization Tells of Serious Hardship Facing Itinerants Hunting Work." *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), November 29, 1931: 1. Accessed February 08, 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/162564276/EB24E089250B40ABPQ/1?accountid=14512>

¹³⁰ "RULE GUARD AT BORDER LEGAL." *Los Angeles-Herald-Express*, 2015. Accessed March 15, 2016. <http://newdeal.feri.org/tolan/tol09.htm>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

With the Los Angeles Mayor supporting Police Chief Davis' strict enforcement of aggressive policing tactics aimed at migrants, vagrancy statutes were used to arrest and prosecute itinerant laborers. Once incarcerated, itinerants were subject to forced labor in "prison camps." As the winter season came about in 1936, Davis insisted migrants work in camps: "There will be no more soft, warm winters for these lazy wanderers...In the past the city has supported too many of them in jails, giving them good food and warm lodging at the taxpayers expense. If they insist on coming here they will be allowed to work for their living in prison camps."¹³⁴ The LAPD remained determined to guard the border from domestic migration.

The same year Fred Lopez—an itinerant train hopper—was riding the freight train between the California and Arizona border. He left a detailed account, stating "lo and behold, there were men actually shooting at the people riding the rails, insisting they go back where they came from. This was an unbearable and frightening experience."¹³⁵ Given the pervasiveness of "bum blockades," it is very likely that James Smith was susceptible to police harassment and forced labor en route to Southern California.

Section III. "The Police had me so scared": Racism and the L.A.P.D.

James Smith migrated in and out of seasonal and short-term jobs across the Southwest. However, a web of laws stifled the progress of poor seasonal workers. The conditions of harvest work obstructed James' migrations due to periods of forced labor along his journey. The labor scene in California would not be much different. When James finally reached California, border

¹³⁴ "DAVIS ACTS TO BLOCK HOBOS' TREK TO CITY: Work Camps Ordered and Patrols Sent Out but No Border Blockade Planned." *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), October 27, 1936: A1. Accessed January 04, 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/164631826/2241B928FE04E11PQ/1?accountid=14512>.

¹³⁵ Fred Lopez online archive transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>. Accessed May 29, 2016.

patrols and strict vagrancy law enforcement created a trap. Vagrancy laws were facially neutral in regards to race, however the enforcement of vagrancy statutes were racially coded, similar to Jim Crow practices in the South.

A *Los Angeles Times* article, “Vagrancy Case Charge Changed to ‘Fragrancy,’” illuminates the criminalization of poverty in California and racialized depictions of black vagrants. The article’s title appropriates and mocks a black male defendant’s inability to correctly say the word vagrancy. The article records an alleged conversation in the courtroom:

“‘Do you know why you are here.’ demanded Judge Wilson.’ ‘Nossah, Jedge, Yo’ Honah, Ah actually don,’ stammered the big negro. ‘Ah was jes’ comin’ outa tha stable whe’ h Ah had been sleepin’ when these yeah gennelmen said ‘Come along to the jail house big boy. ‘An’ Ah went. Ah think they said Ah was charged with fragrancy.’”¹³⁶

The judge gave the defendant a suspended 30 days jail sentence with the expectation that the defendant would be “more careful of [his] lodging places in the future.”¹³⁷

The LAPD over-policed South Central under the guise of “cleaning up” vice. *The Eagle*, a local black owned newspaper, challenged the assertion that over-policing was simply done to stop vice. One article, “Police, Mexicans, and Negroes,” reported, “This week on Monday there were more than fifty offenders in the morals court and every one was either a colored person or a Mexican.”¹³⁸ The criminalization of vice resulted in several laws, strict enforcement, and “anti-vice crusade[s] ... in municipal elections.”¹³⁹

Additionally, the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan in Los Angeles was a threat to blacks in the city. During the 1920s, LA County was home to an estimated 4,000 Ku Klux Klansmen,

¹³⁶ "Vagrancy Case Charge Changed to "Fragrancy"" *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), July 18, 1927: A5. Accessed September 18, 2015. <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/161969940/8D8C93007FD543BAPQ/1?accountid=14512>.

¹³⁷.Ibid.

including police officers as members.¹⁴⁰ Police in the LA region harassed and violently abused blacks, especially if they were outside of the “invisible walls” between non-white and white neighborhoods.¹⁴¹

A confrontation on Memorial Day between sheriffs and a black man escalated into violence at Santa Monica Beach. The officers demanded the man and his family leave the white-only section, stating, “niggers” were not permitted there. The black man was beaten and shot by the sheriffs in front of his wife and child.¹⁴² The sheriffs were charged but never convicted “on account of insufficient evidence.”¹⁴³

The Eagle consistently published articles about the persistent injustices inflicted by the LAPD on the East side and the lack of accountability. In one incident, a white officer stopped and harassed a black man for a minor crime. When the black man fled the scene, the officer “jumped in his squad car and ran him over, killing him.”¹⁴⁴ White officers did not only commit police violence. Two ferocious patrolmen of the East side were black officers, who were feared and despised by the local black community.¹⁴⁵ During a raid, the officers kicked a black woman’s door in without a warrant, claiming the woman and her brother ran an illegal

¹³⁸ *Bound For Freedom*, 276.

¹³⁹ Woods, Gerald. *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*. (New York: Garland, 1993), 19.

¹⁴⁰ Flamming, *Bound For Freedom*, 204.

¹⁴¹ Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, 235.

¹⁴² Flamming, *Bound For Freedom*. 183.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* ,204.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*,276.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

bootlegging business. One officer fatally wounded someone in the home, Sam Faulkner, alleging self-defense. However, eyewitnesses asserted that “[the officer] gunned down an unarmed Faulkner, wounded his partner in the process, and planted a gun on Faulkner’s corpse.”¹⁴⁶ The racial terror that reigned in Black L.A left migrants fearful of the police.

Alfonso Coleman—a black itinerant laborer—came to Los Angeles “to see if I could not find some work. Upon his arrival, Alfonso recalls: “The police had me so scared.”¹⁴⁷ He could not find work, therefore he was constantly harassed and arrested. He stated “They would not let me stay out of jail, on October 10, 1933, I went down where I had been living for the purpose of getting my clothes and the police told me that if he ever caught me on that street he was going to lock me up.”¹⁴⁸ The police harassment, violence, lack of jobs, vagrancy laws, and border patrols made Los Angeles one of the worst cities for migrants during the Great Depression.

Section IV. “Probation for a period of fifteen years”: Forced to Work on the County Road Camp

In February 1934, Los Angeles police arrested James because “I was with some boys who had a stolen coat.”¹⁴⁹ Later that year, James was charged with suspicion of burglary in Los Angeles and two days later indicted on charges of burglary. He was:

Granted probation for a period of fifteen years under the following condition: The first year of the said probation period defendant must serve in the County Road Camp. Defendant may be released after six months if transportation to Tennessee is available. When released defendant must leave the State of California and not return.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 277.

¹⁴⁷ Alfonso Coleman, San Quentin Inmate Case Files #55380, California State Archives F3750: 537.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

James' punishment reflected his status as an outsider of the state. His probation terms included his removal.

The alleged goal of probation in California was to suspend a sentence as an opportunity to allow a defendant to be rehabilitated under supervision in the community. It was supposed to be a rehabilitative substitute to incarceration. Judges granted probation if they believed "the ends of justice" would be done.¹⁵¹ However, the courts had discretionary power to determine the terms of probation.

Judges determined the conditions of probation from a range of possible circumstances, such as "placement in work or road camps . . . reparation, fine, and other conditions which are reasonable, fitting and proper to the end that justice may be done."¹⁵² In the case of James Smith, the courts believed justice would not be served by releasing him back into the community. Instead of being allowed to remain free, he was forced to labor on the Los Angeles County road camp

Road camps were established to expand public roads throughout the state. The prison camps opened up new routes for public transportation and expanded local and state economies.

A newspaper article about a new road using prison labor in the 1930s stated:

There is good reason to believe that the project is now assured public undertaking, and that between the State, county and Federal Interest, it will be carried to successful completion. The work of the prison camp, however, is not expected to bring the north part of the road up to the present-day commercial road standards, but it will open the route and establish it definitely.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Melnick, David H. "Probation in California: Penal Code Section 1203." *California Law Review* 50, no. 4 (October 1962): 667. Accessed February 04, 2016. doi:10.2307/3479227.

¹⁵² "Sentencing Criminals in California. A Study in Haphazard Legislation." *Stanford Law Review* 13, no. 2 (1961): 348. Accessed February 12, 2016. doi:10.2307/1226882.

¹⁵³ "County Ready to Begin Work on 'Short Cut,'" *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 26, 1931, <http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/162449041/1591E1AF9C854A3EPQ/1?accountid=>

The California Penal Code Section 4100-4104 defined the road camps as “constructive labor” for people "convicted of public offenses." Section 4101 reads: "In each county and industrial farm or industrial road camp may be established under this article."¹⁵⁴ James may not have been able to find work, but there was plenty of “constructive labor” for incarcerated itinerants on city development projects.

As a migrant laborer, James had no family, community, or social networks in the state. Therefore, he was forced to labor for the county and then legally banned from the state. “The ends of justice” in the eyes of the courts, was placement on the road camp, removal, and a fifteen-year probation period. James was vulnerable to a probation violation and suspended sentence in Los Angeles at any given time if arrested over the next decade and a half. In other words, James was declared an illegal migrant with no standing in the State of California.

14512. Accessed May 15, 2016. Other editorials: Open Another Camp As Work is Rushed on Road Links. *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*; Oct 11, 1936; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times pg. F3.

<http://search.proquest.com/hnplatimes/docview/164619791/64B54FA23CDC459FPQ/14?accountid=14512>. Accessed May 15, 2016. McAfee, Ward M. "A History of Convict Labor in California." *Southern California Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (April 01, 1990): 19-40. Accessed January 12, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/41171510?ref=search-gateway:62ec9a04dc917484c7ae19c6c96d223f>.

¹⁵⁴ California Penal Code Section 4100-4137. <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=04001-05000&file=4100-4137>.

Chapter 3. Unauthorized Migrants: No Work, No Relief



Map II.

Section I. Jailed Along the Harvest Routes

After being released from the road camp in 1935, James “floated” to Louisiana in hopes of finding work. There, he was investigated by police and later released at an unknown date. In 1936, he hopped a train and returned to California to follow the harvest, despite the Los Angeles

county judge's order to "leave the state and not return."¹⁵⁵ His presence in the state violated his probation and local vagrancy laws, making him, in effect, an unauthorized migrant in the State of California. Breaking through Chief Davis' border patrols, James made it to Imperial County, which was along the California border near Arizona and Mexico.

During the first couple decades of the 20th century, Imperial Valley newspapers used derogatory racial slurs to depict blacks, such as "'Sambos,' 'darkies,' 'coons,' 'black monsters,' and the occasional 'nigger.' All racial groups loathed blacks, and some employers stopped recruiting them."¹⁵⁶ Farmers preferred to hire Mexican workers who were easily accessible on the border of Imperial County and Mexico.

By the late 1920s, federal authorities strictly enforced immigration laws by threatening growers that filled their workforce with undocumented Mexicans. The race-class hierarchy was drastically redefined during the Great Depression due to the large increase in poor white, Filipino, and blacks migrants coinciding with Mexican repatriations.¹⁵⁷

James remained in a no-win situation. It was more difficult to receive federal relief as a non-resident. As a migrant laborer, he moved constantly in search of work and better wages. At a time when farm unions were building strength and gaining recognition, better wages, and access to state work relief, itinerant laborers were likely hired at significantly lower wages.

Similar to L.A. County, Imperial County "judges used the vagrancy law to get rid of

¹⁵⁵ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁵⁶ Andrés, Benny J. *Connecting the Greater West: Power and Control in the Imperial Valley: Nature, Agribusiness, and Workers on the California Borderland, 1900-1940* (Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 101. Accessed March 14, 2016. http://ucelinks.cdlib.org:8888/sfx_local?sid=SCP:DDA&genre=book&pid=%253Cebruary%253E11001433%253C%252February%253E.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.,125.

'undesirables' and force the unemployed to find work or leave the county."¹⁵⁸ An Imperial County newspaper editorial detailed, "under the vagrancy law all the police had to prove was that the offender had no visible means of support, or that he had the reputation of being a dangerous and suspicious character, to arrest him."¹⁵⁹ Like other California regions, vagrancy laws were enforced to rid unwanted people from the region.

City police commissioners in the Imperial Valley tracked the movement of people that seemed out of place, arguing that vagabonds were floating to the area after being kicked out of other sections of the state. The county was known to have forced unemployed vagrants, union organizers, and convicted persons to work on chain gangs and labor on city street development projects.¹⁶⁰ In Calexico—a city in the Imperial Valley—the police chief threatened migrants at gunpoint. He asserted, "I am going to inspect every queer looking stranger that lights in this town and if they cannot give an accurate account of themselves, they will be forced to walk the railroad tracks out of town at the point of a .45 caliber Colt."¹⁶¹

In 1936, James was captured by police and charged with vagrancy in the Imperial Valley. The rhythms of his life and labor violated at least five of the state's anti-vagrancy laws. After his arrest and conviction, James was forced to serve fifteen days in the notorious Imperial County jail. The California State Board of Charities and Corrections described the Imperial jail as one that was "almost inexcusably bad."¹⁶² They noted,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 56-57.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² State Board of Charities and Corrections, California. *A Study in County Jails in California* (Sacramento: California State Print. Office, 1916), 16.

Imperial County Jail consists of one room with a single cage of four cells about 7 by 9 by 7 feet. There are four bunks in each cell, thus accommodating, in a very crowded manner, 16 prisoners. However, we have counted 30 men in this cell room and are informed by the sheriff that it has held as many as 44. There is one toilet in the corner. This was stopped up at the time of one inspection and sewage was running out over the floor...most of the prisoners sleep on the floor or on top of the cage.¹⁶³

The often overcrowded and unsanitary jail exposed James to the harsh conditions of overflowing sewage. He got out and continued his journey searching for harvest work.

Released from jail in 1936, James followed the harvest North into the Sacramento Valley. There, too, James was charged with vagrancy and sentenced to six months in the county jail. He was ordered to serve sixty of those days in jail and then released as a “floater,”¹⁶⁴ meaning he was ordered to leave town immediately and never return. A study of California county jails describes vagrancy charges and floater customs noting:

Sometimes a jail sentence is imposed, but suspended on conditions that the 'undesirable citizen' leave town within a few hours...We find frequently such records as the following in jail registers: 'ordered to disappear,' 'floated,' 'ordered to leave town in an half hour.'¹⁶⁵

Being criminalized and forced out of town limited the areas where James could seek employment in California. Floater convictions empowered Judges to create off-limit zones for itinerants in California. Kicked out of the city, James followed the harvest back to Imperial County.

He must have known where to find work. However, James could not escape the police there. In February of 1937, James was again jailed for vagrancy in El Centro, the largest city in Imperial County. He was convicted and forced to serve another fifteen days in jail. Upon release

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

from the town's "inexcusable" jail, James tried his luck again in the harvest ranches of the Central Valley region.

The next month James was caught jumping a freight train and ordered to serve 10 days in the county jail in Stockton, California. Like the Imperial Valley jail, the county jail at Stockton "[was] not sanitary. The vermin instead of being kept out by examination of incoming prisoners are sprayed with antigermines, the odor of which pervades the entire jail...they sit and sleep on the cement floors over which are spread dirty mattresses and blankets."¹⁶⁶

It was impossible for James to avoid vagrancy charges and jail time for jumping trains. If one job did not pan out, he would have had to travel to a different location to find a harvest job. But traveling unemployed and sleeping in barns was criminalized and thereby just as bad as jumping trains. James was stuck in a dilemma destined for failure.

Within three weeks, James jumped a train, hitchhiked, or walked to Sacramento looking for work. He had already been ordered to float out of Sacramento Valley, but returned and faced the consequences. Once again, he would serve two months in jail in Sacramento before being kicked out of the city again. This time, James was also charged with a probation violation from Los Angeles County when the L.A. sheriff was notified of his arrest.

Taken back to Los Angeles and incarcerated, from July of 1937 to January of 1938, James was jailed and forced to labor on the county "Road Camp" again in Los Angeles, this time for violating probation orders to leave the state. Immediately after his release from the county road camp, James left California and headed to Arizona. Arizona was another region known for cotton production.

¹⁶⁵ State Board of Charities and Corrections, *A Study in County Jails in California*, 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

James had only been released from the L.A county road camp for seven days before he was charged with vagrancy in Tucson, Arizona and ordered to pay “\$10.00¹⁶⁷ or [do] 10 days.”¹⁶⁸ Donald Kopecky, another migrant, spent some time in Tucson, Arizona. His account of migrant labor contextualizes James’ vagrancy charge. Donald recalls:

Tucson AZ was a bad place to spend the winter. There were so many transient persons descending there in the winter, the police were constantly checking on the rail yards. If a person could not show they had a residence or a job they were charged with vagrancy. When they could not pay the fine they were sent to jail to work out the sentence. If after 24 hours after being released the person was not out of town, he was picking [sic] up and charged again. Some people spent a good deal of winter in Jail.¹⁶⁹

It is likely James was forced to work out his sentence, since he probably did not have ten dollars to escape jail time. James may have been snatched off the railways in Arizona, or he may have been stopped by police and could not show he had a job or residency. Soon after, James left Arizona and travelled back to the California. By 1938, he searched for work in the San Joaquin Valley.

The 1938 strikes against lowed cotton wages left growers in the San Joaquin Valley searching for a cheap work force. "Even though Kern County sheriff Ed Champness ordered unemployed workers to pick cotton or face arrest on vagrancy charges, growers were unable to get enough workers at the low rate."¹⁷⁰ Itinerant laborers, destitute and vulnerable to arrest for

¹⁶⁷ Ten dollars inflated in 2016 is \$168.94.
<http://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/inflation.php?amount=10&year=1937>.

¹⁶⁸ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁶⁹ Donald Kopecky online archive transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

¹⁷⁰ Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 166.

unemployment would have been the best surplus work force, especially being unable to receive work relief aid. It is likely James was forced to work at a lower wage.

James' work history was mainly picking cotton and grapes. Fresno, California, where James worked in 1938, was known for cotton and grape harvesting. That same year, Richard Reneau was working in the Fresno harvest where James most likely worked. Richard recalls, "One time out of Fresno, Calif [sic], we took a job picking cotton. Second picking. We were paid 75 c[ent] a hundred pound. They charged 25 c[ent] for breakfast and 75 c[ent] for lunch and 50 c[ent] for supper. We picked three days and owed our souls to the company store. We left at night owing more than we made."¹⁷¹ As an itinerant worker, James was especially vulnerable to this common form of debt peonage. Having no place to live, he likely would have had to pay for his food and lodging like Richard Reneau and would have left the job owing more than he made. James notes, in 1938, "[I] was last employed at Fresno, California picking grapes."¹⁷²

Walter Miletich worked in the grape harvests of Fresno as well. He picked grapes "at a penny a box and owed 56 cents at the end of three days."¹⁷³ The harvest wages were unprotected. The labor that James did was probably underpaid like Walter and others. By this time, James would have been exposed to harvest labor for at least a decade. The seasonal job picking grapes that James held in Fresno would eventually be terminated after two months. James may have

¹⁷¹ Richard Reneau online archive transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

¹⁷² San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁷³ Walther Miletich online archive transcript cited from Uys, Errol Lincoln. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://erroluys.com/RidingtheRailsTeenagersontheMoveDuringtheGreatDepression-Archive5.htm>.

given up on finding work in the harvest valleys or perhaps he believed he could fare better with a job in Los Angeles.

Section II. “Unable to find a job and needed money to feed myself”: Theft for Survival

“I was without employment I needed money for food and lodging”¹⁷⁴

The Depression was a devastating experience for black itinerant youth in California, especially in harvest work. The quest to find work defined their journeys. *The Trap* stole their youth. Shut out of work and threatened by the criminalization of unemployment and itinerancy in California, they found alternative ways to survive. Coming of age in the Great Depression, they had to find “food to feed myself.”¹⁷⁵

Napoleon Branch was born in 1920 in Purcell, Oklahoma. He went to the Booker T. Washington School until the fifth grade in Wichita Falls, Texas. Napoleon states, “when I was four years of age my father was sent to prison for murder and within a year my mother remarried which did not make my home life very pleasant I repeatedly tried to run away.”¹⁷⁶ Napoleon was forced to fend for his life while away from home.

By fifteen years old—in the in the midst of the Great Depression—he ran away to the Sacramento Valley where he found a job working in the harvest fields close by. When work in Sacramento ceased, Napoleon went to Kansas with “the intention of working there in the harvest

¹⁷⁴ Folsom Inmate Case Files, Napoleon Branch, #23064, California State Archives, F3745: 500-600.

¹⁷⁵ Folsom Inmate Case Files, Robert White, #23921, #23981. California State Archives, F3745: 500-600.

¹⁷⁶ Folsom Inmate Case Files, Napoleon Branch, #23064.

fields.”¹⁷⁷ Things did not go as Napoleon expected. He notes, “due to a lack of funds I committed a burglary and was sent to prison.”¹⁷⁸

When Napoleon was released from prison, he immediately left Kansas and returned to the Sacramento Valley with the “intentions of working in the harvest fields.”¹⁷⁹ However, the work was short-lived and left Napoleon down and out. Napoleon’s intentions were to work in the harvest as he had always done. He notes, “as soon as I was out of employment I needed money for food and lodging.”¹⁸⁰ One night, Napoleon and another person strong-armed a man sleeping in the railroad yards. Napoleon was forced to survive by any means necessary, as his guilt demonstrates, “this [robbery] looked as the easiest means to supply my needs.”¹⁸¹ Napoleon was convicted and sentenced to serve “1 Year to Life” and received at Folsom State prison in 1940.¹⁸² Napoleon refused to remain hungry and homeless but he, and other youth like him, attempted to survive the Great Depression the best way they knew how.

Robert “Cannibal” White was born in Dallas Texas in 1917. He ran away at the age of 14 to seek economic refuge for him and his mother. Soon after, Robert was captured by police in Los Angeles and charged as a ward of the state. Considered a juvenile delinquent, Robert was

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

put on a train and given definite instructions to not return to California. Once again, Robert made his way back to California by “hitchhiking.”¹⁸³

In 1930 Robert was charged with vagrancy as a result of disturbing the peace and annoyance of the public for allegedly stealing lunches and other items from parked automobiles near Los Angeles County beaches. In the same area, to make money on the side Robert was a boxer, “prize fighting under the name of Tarzan Carnera.”¹⁸⁴ Life would not get any easier for Robert throughout the decade as he transitioned into adulthood during the Depression.

In 1937, at the age of 18, Robert was charged with Burglary, noting, “unable to obtain a job, because of being an ex-convict, and because I needed money to obtain food with, I broke into a cleaning establishment in San Jose and stole some clothes.”¹⁸⁵ Following his conviction, Robert was forced to serve five and a half years in prison. Like Napoleon and others, Robert was unable to find work and needed money and food to survive. By September of 1938, James Smith left the rural regions of California and headed to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, James needed to be particularly careful of running into police. James most likely would “wash[] cars wherever he could find such work”¹⁸⁶ when in Los Angeles. Soon after his arrival, James was hospitalized for “double pneumonia.”¹⁸⁷ Both of his lungs were infected with a virus, fungi, bacteria, or a parasite. His ailments were most likely a result of riding freight trains and being detained in unsanitary county jails. For over a decade, he was exposed to extreme amounts of smoke and toxic gases riding boxcars.

¹⁸³ Folsom Inmate Case Files, Robert White, #23291.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

James Smith spent most of the Depression years in and out of short-term work. In his quest to find employment, he was captured and forced to serve jail time in at least seven different county jails from Alabama to California. His poverty was criminalized in nearly every town he resided. By the winter of 1938, James was back in custody of the LAPD.

Without money for food and housing, he had nowhere to go after being released from the hospital with pneumonia. Luckily James found support from a friend. However, while lying “sick in bed” the police raided the room he stayed in. James was arrested, indicted, and later found guilty of three counts of burglary and receiving stolen property after a suitcase with stolen items was found in the room.¹⁸⁸

By the last year of the Great Depression, James Smith was 23 years old. After 11 years on the road and in and out of jail, he gave his last plea before being sentenced to prison. When asked about making adjustments if he was granted an extended probation instead of prison, James States:

I would like another chance on probation because I can live up to it in every respect. Would like to get out of the State and stay out, because I can't find my line of farming here in this state. If I am giving another chance, I will get out and stay out...because I can find a job just as soon as I get out of the state.¹⁸⁹

James finally realized that California was not the best state to find work in the harvest. He believed there was no work in the city for someone who only knew farm labor. His interview with probation officers reveals his struggle to find work in California.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion. No Way Out: 5 to Life in San Quentin State Prison

“My crime career is not so long that I can't get out and readjust myself... My plans are to go back down south where I am sure there is plenty of my line of farming to do...I know I can get along on the farm because that is what I have did all my life.”¹⁹⁰

Being funneled in and out of the prison system in California was not due to James Smith's personal failures. He was *trapped* by the system. His freedom was based on his ability to find adequate work or leave California. Instead of releasing James as he pleaded, the judge ordered him to serve 5 to life in San Quentin State Prison. Under the indeterminate sentencing law,¹⁹¹ James would serve a minimum of five years and potentially could serve up to life in prison or on parole if released from prison.¹⁹² He was expected to “readjust,” however, “rehabilitation” was not an option when employment was scarce and social support was denied.

The story of James Smith and other black itinerants who traveled westward for work as youth reveals the persistent barriers awaiting black low-skilled laborers in California during the Great Depression. Although historians have thoroughly documented convict leasing, and forced “hard labor” in the Jim Crow South, casting this experience as a solely Southern narrative, James' story sheds light on coercive labor made possible through the carceral state in California.

Thus, this thesis centers the experiences of young black migrant laborers migrating to California while the political economy was changing and law enforcement was preventing free

¹⁹⁰ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

¹⁹¹ The California Indeterminate Sentence Law of 1917 established maximum and minimum terms for various crimes, allowing a board of terms and paroles to determine prisoners' term of confinement. The purpose of parole was to allow a prisoner's history of crime and prison conduct to determine suitability for release. For further details, see Messinger, Sheldon L. “The Foundations of Parole in California.” *Law and Society Review* 19.1 (1985): 69-106. Simon, Jonathan. *Poor Discipline: Parole and the Social Control of the Underclass, 1890-1990*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993. Rothman, David J. *Conscience and Convenience: The Asylum and Its Alternatives in Progressive America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1980.

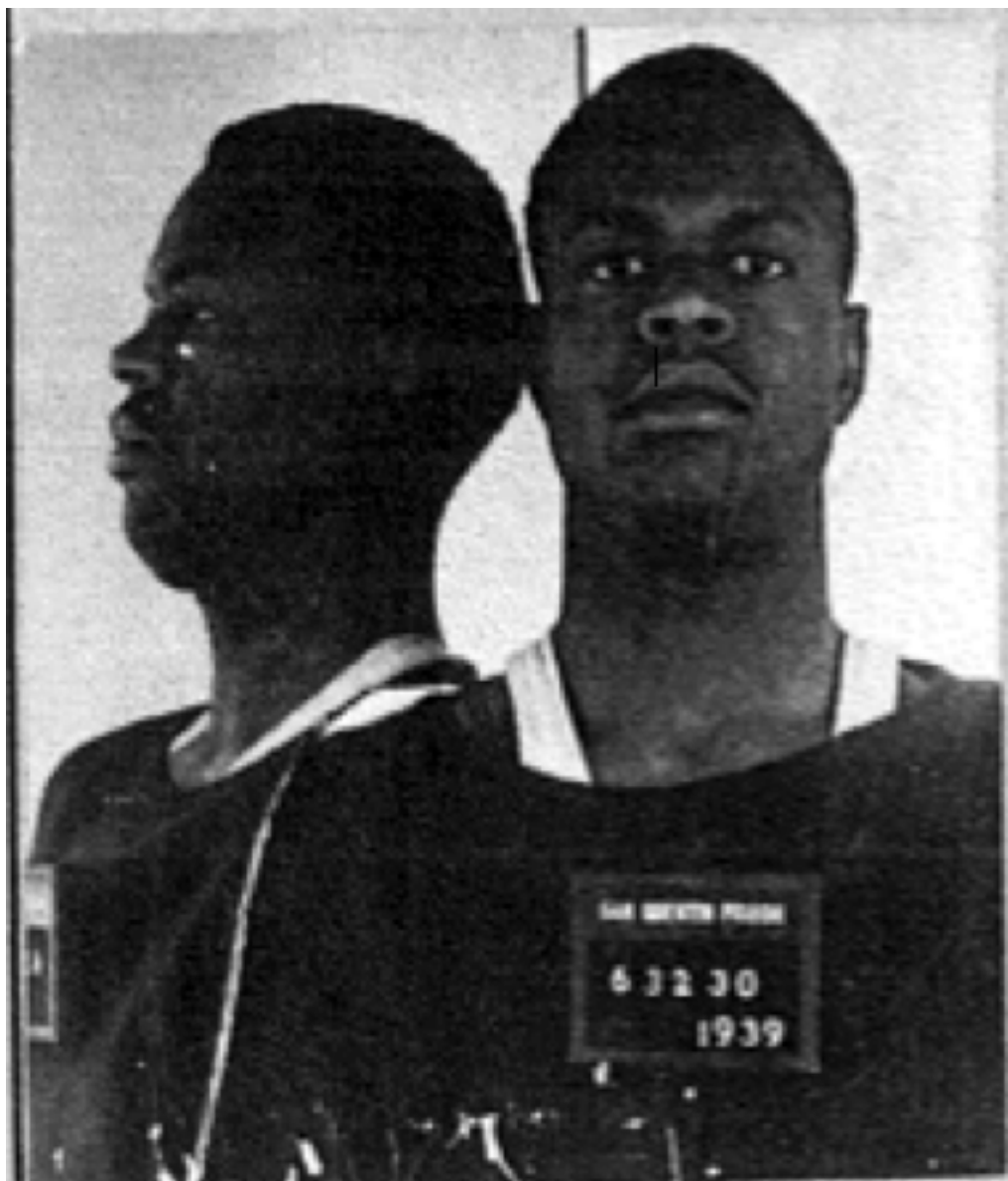
¹⁹² San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230.

movement into the state during the Great Depression. These youth, came with nothing to their name and were funneled in and out of short-term work. The laws in California criminalized itinerancy, leaving them vulnerable to police harassment. The only consistent work James had access to was through his relationship with the carceral state. Although not referred to as convict leasing, the Los Angeles County “road camp” was identical in many ways to involuntary servitude. After working without compensation, James was told to leave. Thus, following the harvest was a “catch 22” for black itinerant youth. James left the Cotton Belt of the South to cotton industries in the West.

Race is central to this story. Housing segregation, racism, police harassment, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, employer discrimination, changing industries, and competition with a diverse workforce, severely limited access to work and unions. Because itinerants were frequently mobile, they were not as familiar with racial boundaries and more likely to roam in regions that most black residents may have avoided. Additionally, being in California for a short period of time constrained their access to work relief when unemployed.

James’ working history is inseparable from his experiences with the carceral state. He was forced to make a way out of no way, but without strong social or familial support networks and long-term work, jail and unfree labor was a revolving door. Charting the life of James Smith broadens the historiography on black migrations and labor in California. Racism and limited labor autonomy were out of his control—but he endured it in order to survive.

Appendix 1. Photo of James Smith¹⁹³



¹⁹³ San Quentin Inmate Case Files, James Smith, #63230. Department of Corrections. Office of Secretary of State. California State Archives, F3750: 636.

Appendix 2. James Smith's Criminal History¹⁹⁴

- ① 1 - 8-32 Mobile, Alabama - Vag.
Five days hard labor.
- ② 10-21-32 La Grange, Texas - Vag.
No disposition shown.
- ③ 2 -20-34 LAPD - Petty Theft.
10 days Div. 30 2-20-34.

Defendant states, "I was with some boys who had a stolen coat."
- ④ { 9 -23-34 LAPD - Suspicion of Burglary.
To L. A. Co. 9-25-34.
- 9 -25-34 LACo. LAPD arrest - Burglary.
- all-28-34 Probation fifteen years; jail one year. Defendant states, "I burglarized a house and took a pocket-book."
- 1 -19-35 To Road Camp #7.
- 5 -31-35 Released; probation modified and custody of LAPD.
- ⑤ 7 -10-35 Lake Charles, Louisiana - Investigation; released.
- ⑥ 6 - 5-36 Imperial County - Vag; 15 days.
- ⑦ 8 -23-36 Sacramento - Vag; six months County Jail - to serve 60 days. Balance floater 8-24-36.
- ⑧ 9- 21-36 WANTED Sheriff's case - Viol. probation and Burglary.
- ⑨ 2 -17-37 El Centro, Calif. - Vag; 15 days.
- ⑩ 3 - 8-37 Tracy, Calif. - 587-C P.C. - 10 days County Jail, Stockton.
- ⑪ 3 -30-37 Sacramento - Vag. Six months County Jail. To serve 60 days. Balance floater 1 yr. 4-2-37.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

- 4 -23-37 LACo Sheriff "T" - Viol. Prob.
- ①⑦ 5 -10-37 Sent. Pt. Probation eight months.
- 6 -15-37 To Road Camp #3.
- 9 - 3-37 Returned to County Jail and re-released expiration on 1-10-38.
- ①③ 1 -17-38 Tucson, Arizona - Vag. Investigation. \$10.00 or 10 days.
- ①④ 3 -23-38 Tucson, Arizona - Simple battery. 10 days. Defendant states, "I got into a fight."
- ①⑤ 5 -17-38 El Centro - Possession stolen property. 90 days. Defendant states, "I had a stolen knife in my possession."
- 18a 10-18-38 LAPD - Suspicion Burglary. Released 10-21-38.
- ①8b 10-18-38 LAPD - R. S. P. Released 10-21-38.
- 11- 9-38 Police Department, Bell. Hold for Sheriff's Office. Charge not given.
- ①⑥ 11-12-38 Released to custody Sheriff LACo.
- 11-12-38 LACo Sheriff - Suspicion Burglary.

Appendix 3. 1872 California Anti-Vagrancy Law

1. Every person (except a California Indian) without visible means of living who has the physical ability to work, and who does not seek employment, nor labor when offered him.
 2. Every beggar who solicits alms as a business
 3. Every person who roams from place to place without any lawful business.
 4. Every person know to be a pickpocket, thief, burglar or confidence operator, either by his own confession, or by his having been convicted of any such offenses, and having no visible or lawful means of support, when found loitering around any steamboat landing, railroad depot, banking institution, broker's office, place of amusement, auction room, store, show or crowded thoroughfare, car, or omnibus, or any public gathering or assemble
 5. Every lewd or dissolute person, or every person who loiters in or about public toilets in public parks
 6. Every person who wanders about the streets at late or unusual hour of the night, without any visible or lawful business
 7. Every person who lodges in any barn, shed, shop outhouse, vessel, or place other than such as is kept for lodging purposes, without permission of the owner or party entitled to the possession, thereof
 8. Every person who lives in and about houses of ill-fame
 9. Every person who acts as a runner or capper for attorneys in and about police courts or city prison
 10. Every common prostitute
 11. Every common drunkard
 12. Every person who loiters, prowls or wanders upon the private property of another, in the nighttime, without visible or lawful business with the owner or occupant thereof' or while loitering, prowling or wandering upon the private property of another, in the nighttime, peeks in the door or window of any building or structure located thereof and which is inhabited by human beings, without visible or lawful business with owner or occupant thereof;
- Is a vagrant, and is punishable by a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by not such fine and imprisonment.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Sherry, Arthur H. "Vagrants, Rogues and Vagabonds. Old Concepts in Need of Revision." *California Law Review* 48, no. 4 (1960): 562. Accessed January 12, 2016. doi:10.2307/3478590.

Appendix 4. Los Angeles Demographics 1920-1940¹⁹⁶

	Total	White	Black	American Indian/ Eskimo	Asian/ Pacific	Other Race	Hispanic (origin) of any race	White, not of Hispanic origin
1920	576,673	546,864	15,579	189	14,041	(X)	(NA)	(NA)
	100%	94.8%	2.7 %	-----	2.4%			
1930	1,238,048	1,170,700	38,894	616	27,838	(X)	(NA)	(NA)
	100%	94.6%	3.1%	-----	2.2%			
1930 "Mexican " in Other race	1,238,048	1,073,584	38,894	616	27,838	97,116	(NA)	(NA)
	100%	86.7%	3.1%	-----	2.2%	7.8%		
1940	1,504,277	1,406,430	63,744	862	33,211	(X)	107,513	1,298,917
	100%	93.5%	4.2%	.1%	2.2%		7.1%	86.3%

¹⁹⁶ Gibson, Cambell, and Kay Jung. "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States." February 2005. Accessed August 09, 2015. <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2005/demo/POP-twps0076.pdf?csp=SERP>.

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