

# MWM



SPRING/SUMMER 2016

## Merrick Washington Magazine



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## **About Durham Colored Library**

Durham Colored Library, Inc. (DCL) is a 98-year-old nonprofit dedicated to lifting up stories about African Americans, both current and historical, to help create a more comprehensive picture of the American experience. *Merrick/Washington Magazine (MWM)* is one of DCL's current projects. As Board Chair C. Eileen Welch Watts explains, "The DCL board is committed to ensuring *MWM* elevates interesting, sharply written material that is not easily accessible to our readers, and that can be achieved and readily available on our website, [www.DurhamCL.org](http://www.DurhamCL.org)." This magazine is provided free-of-charge thanks to the generosity of our donors and partners. To help support our work, please see the Pledge Form on the last page, or visit our website.

DCL, Inc. was established in 1913 by Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore. In 1918, it was officially chartered as a nonprofit organization to manage the Durham Colored Library facility and staff. The physical library, which was renamed the Stanford L. Warren library in 1940, remained under DCL, Inc.'s management until 1969 when the Durham County Public library system was integrated and absorbed the Stanford L. Warren library into its network. The DCL, Inc. nonprofit continues to function today producing literary projects about Black history and culture.

[www.DurhamCL.org](http://www.DurhamCL.org).



*Photo: First Durham Colored Library building, donated by John Merrick and located at the corner of Fayetteville and Pettigrew streets.*

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Dear *MWM* Readers,

During a national election year, the environment can be exciting, eye-opening, and unpredictable. It's a time when social, economic and environmental issues receive heightened attention and scrutiny. It is also a time when we have to take a close look at where we've been, and try to imagine where we want to go.

This issue of the *Merrick/Washington Magazine (MWM)* tries to capture that spirit within the articles we collected. Some of them cast a light on surprising facts contributing to unequal treatment of certain populations by doctors and police officers. There is also a set of articles that question how well past and present government policies have served our communities, and which new proposed policies may deliver where others have failed (pg).

But, to keep us moving forward in tackling the issues discussed in this publication and on the 2016 campaign trail, we have to be able to dream. We can look to television (pg), film (pg), technology (pg) and sports heroes to bring us stories and characters that help us understand and empathize with each other, generating emotions that fuel the development of a more just world.

We hope you enjoy this issue. To kick us off, we are honored to open this issue with an original *MWM* article by Dr. Leon Herndon, Chief of the Glaucoma Division at the Duke Eye Center.

- Brandi Sansom Stewart, Editor

## **GENERAL NEWS**

### **Patient Perspectives in Glaucoma Management**

By Leon W. Herndon, MD

Professor of Ophthalmology | Chief, Glaucoma Division,  
Duke Eye Center

*Merrick Washington Magazine* | February 2016

Glaucoma patients place very high value on their vision. In one study, when asked how many years of their lives they would be willing to give up to have perfect vision, on average glaucoma patients would give up 6.1%, and blind patients 33.1%, of their remaining lifespan. In another study of 325 patients, individuals whose vision only enabled them to count fingers in the better eye were willing on average to trade approximately half of their remaining lifespan for perfect vision. The question patients may want to ask, but often do not, is “Am I going blind?” The fact that 175,000 Americans over age 40 have low vision attributed to glaucoma means that patient fears are not unfounded. Patients are rightfully concerned about the possibility of developing visual impairments that affect their ability to work, read, drive, and enjoy their lives.

Yet our clinical experience tells us that over the long term, only a small percentage of glaucoma patients go blind, and most treated glaucoma patients will not go bilaterally blind in their lifetimes. Nevertheless, even treated patients with eye pressure in the normal range may progressively lose visual field. A study of untreated patients in a primarily black population in the West Indies found that 16% of the

glaucomatous eyes reached end-stage field loss within 10 years, including some eyes that had no to minimal visual field loss at baseline. These data, in conjunction with epidemiologic evidence that only 50% of people with glaucoma know that they have it, suggest that in some patients, failure to treat, or failure to treat to low pressures, can lead to rapid progression to blindness.

Increasingly we are discovering that visual disabilities affect the quality of life of glaucoma patients, even if they have not progressed to blindness. As glaucoma progresses, patients experience diminished contrast sensitivity, depth perception, and peripheral vision.

Glaucoma patients may mistakenly ascribe such vision changes to normal loss of vision due to aging.

Although blindness is the most extreme consequence of this life-long disease, less severe visual deterioration can have a profound impact on the daily life of glaucoma patients. Numerous studies have shown a correlation between visual field loss and lower quality of life scores. Even small amounts of field loss are associated with a decrease in quality of life.

Patients may have difficulties with reading a newspaper, watching television, recognizing faces, adapting to different levels of lighting, dealing with glare, and noticing objects or people in their periphery. They may also find that they trip over curbs or bump into objects. Patients may also



experience a general loss of confidence in performing tasks related to vision, as well as diminished self-esteem.

Visual impairment of patients may have serious repercussions in increasing the likelihood of traffic accidents, falls, and fractures. In particular, glaucoma has been identified as an independent risk factor for automobile crashes: drivers diagnosed with glaucoma have been found to be 3-4 times more likely to have been involved in a crash, as compared with age-matched drivers without glaucoma. Patients who perceive problems with their vision and driving may compensate by reducing the number of miles driven and driving only under ideal lighting conditions. For many patients, however, driving is essential to maintain independence. Glaucoma patients frequently report that their inability or reduced ability to drive has a major negative impact on their quality of life.

Glaucoma patients fear blindness or any compromise in vision that would diminish their ability to perform daily activities; they may be amenable, therefore, to more aggressive intraocular pressure lowering than one might expect. A recent survey of glaucoma patients conducted by the Glaucoma Research Foundation found that patients will tolerate cosmetic side effects in order to minimize disease progression and preserve vision. For example, 92% of participants stated that they wanted the medication that would lower intraocular pressure most effectively, even if it caused temporary red eyes.

In short, glaucoma patients recognize that quality of life is harmed by visual impairment, and they are highly motivated to preserve their sight, and will tolerate transient side effects in favor of efficacy.

**The disturbing reason some African American patients may be undertreated for pain**

By Sandhya Somashekhar

*The Washington Post* | April 4, 2016

African Americans are routinely under-treated for their pain compared with whites, according to research. A study released Monday sheds some disturbing light on why that might be the case.

Researchers at the University of Virginia quizzed white medical students and residents to see how many believed inaccurate and at times "fantastical" differences about the two races -- for example, that blacks have less sensitive nerve endings than whites or that black people's blood coagulates more quickly. They found that fully half thought at least one of the false statements presented was possibly, probably or definitely true.

Moreover, those who held false beliefs often rated black patients' pain as lower than that of white patients and made less appropriate recommendations about how they should be treated.

The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, could help illuminate one of the most vexing problems in pain treatment today: That whites are more likely than blacks to be prescribed strong pain medications for equivalent ailments.

A 2000 study out of Emory University found that at a hospital emergency department in Atlanta, 74 percent of white patients with bone fractures received painkillers compared with 50 percent of black patients. Similarly, a paper last year found that black children with appendicitis were less likely to receive pain medication than their white counterparts. And a 2007 study found that physicians were more likely to underestimate the pain of black patients compared with other patients.

Researchers who study health disparities have said that unconscious stereotypes about African Americans likely contribute to this problem, as well as physicians' difficulty empathizing with patients whose experiences differ from theirs.

The University of Virginia study buttresses arguments that physician bias is a factor. Its research had two parts: One looked at a random sample of 92 whites from across the country. The second queried 222 white medical students and residents at the university and elsewhere. In both cases, participants were given a series of statements that contained accurate or inaccurate information about the biological differences between blacks and whites.

"We were expecting some endorsement" of the false beliefs, said Kelly Hoffman, a U-Va. doctoral candidate in psychology who led the study. But she said the researchers were surprised so many in the group with medical training endorsed the false beliefs, some of which she called "more outlandish."

For example, 58 percent of the study's general group said they believed that "blacks' skin is thicker than whites'." About 40 percent of first- and second-year medical students also thought that was true, as did 25 percent of residents -- doctors who recently completed their studies and now are receiving more specialized training.

Also surprising was that so many of the students and new physicians did not believe true statements about biological differences between the races, Hoffman said. For example, only half of residents knew that whites are less susceptible to heart disease than blacks.

The medical group was given one extra test. After reading brief case studies of two patients in pain, one white and one black, the students and physicians were asked to rate each individual's pain as well as make treatment recommendations. The researchers then compared the results with recommendations from 10 experienced physicians who had analyzed the case studies without any racial information included.

"What we found is those who endorsed more of those false beliefs showed more bias and were less accurate in their treatment recommendations," Hoffman said.

## **Study Reveals Significant Overlap Between Police Brutality Deaths And Disabilities [EXCERPT]**

By Alex Zielinski

*ThinkProgress* | March 9, 2016

Researchers have uncovered a commonly missing factor in police brutality stories: A victim's disability. According to an in-depth study published this week by the Ruderman Family Foundation, a disabled advocacy group, up to half of all people killed by law enforcement are living with a disability.

This is the case for the majority of the high-profile incidents in the last few years, many of which have become the face of the Black Lives Matter movement, the study finds.

Freddie Gray was a victim of lead poisoning, which can cause developmental disabilities (a fear that's become more widespread in the aftermath of Flint, Michigan's water crisis). Sandra Bland had epilepsy, and being jailed without her medication may have unleashed depressive side effects some say lead to her alleged suicide. And officials claimed Eric Garner "almost definitely...would not have died" if he hadn't suffered from serious obesity — seeming to blame Garner's disability for his death.

The disabilities featured in these prominent cases, along with many others mentioned in the study, are not always

detectable by law enforcement. But others, as with Brian Sterner, who was thrown from his wheelchair by police who thought he was faking his disability, and a Houston double amputee shot for threatening an officer with a pen, are impossible to miss.

“Training is a necessary first step. Reforming the system follows closely behind,” said Jay Ruderman, president of the foundation. “The rights of people with disabilities must be respected just like any other American citizen.”

However, researchers say the bigger problem lies in the hands of the reporters covering these cases. The way the media often relays this information limits the public’s comprehensive understanding of disability issues, which could inform necessary change in how law enforcement officials interact with people with disabilities. [...]

*To access this full article, follow this link:  
<http://bit.ly/23hwoMk>*

## **How the Green Book Helped African-American Tourists Navigate a Segregated Nation**

By Jacinda Townsend

*Smithsonian Magazine* | April 2016

For black Americans traveling by car in the era of segregation, the open road presented serious dangers. Driving interstate distances to unfamiliar locales, black motorists ran into institutionalized racism in a number of

pernicious forms, from hotels and restaurants that refused to accommodate them to hostile “sundown towns,” where posted signs might warn people of color that they were banned after nightfall.

Paula Wynter, a Manhattan-based artist, recalls a frightening road trip when she was a young girl during the 1950s. In North Carolina, her family hid in their Buick after a local sheriff passed them, made a U-turn and gave chase. Wynter’s father, Richard Irby, switched off his headlights and parked under a tree. “We sat until the sun came up,” she says. “We saw his lights pass back and forth. My sister was crying; my mother was hysterical.”

“It didn’t matter if you were Lena Horne or Duke Ellington or Ralph Bunche traveling state to state, if the road was not friendly or obliging,” says New York City-based filmmaker and playwright Calvin Alexander Ramsey. With director and co-producer Becky Wible Searles, he interviewed Wynter for their forthcoming documentary about the visionary entrepreneur who set out to make travel easier and safer for African-Americans. Victor H. Green, a 44-year-old black postal carrier in Harlem, relied on his own experiences and on recommendations from black members of his postal service union for the inaugural guide bearing his name, *The Negro Motorist Green-Book*, in 1937. The 15-page directory covered Green’s home turf, the New York metropolitan area, listing establishments that welcomed blacks. The power of the guide, says Ramsey, also the author of a children’s book and a play focused on *Green-Book* history, was that it “created a safety net. If a person could travel by car—and

those who could, did—they would feel more in control of their destiny. The Green-Book was what they needed.”

The Green-Book final edition, in 1966-67, filled 99 pages and embraced the entire nation and even some international cities. The guide pointed black travelers to places including hotels, restaurants, beauty parlors, nightclubs, golf courses and state parks. (The 1941 edition above resides in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.)

Mail carriers, Ramsey explains, were uniquely situated to know which homes would accommodate travelers; they mailed reams of listings to Green. And black travelers were soon assisting Green—submitting suggestions, in an early example of what today would be called user-generated content. Another of Green’s innovations prefigured today’s residential lodging networks; like Airbnb, his guide listed private residences where black travelers could stay safely. Indeed, it was an honor to have one’s home listed as a rooming house in the Green-Book, though the listings themselves were minimalist: “ANDALUSIA (Alabama)  
TOURIST HOMES: Mrs. Ed. Andrews, 69 N. Cotton Street.”

The Green-Book was indispensable to black-owned businesses. For historians, says Smithsonian curator Joanne Hyppolite, the listings offer a record of the “rise of the black middle class, and in particular, of the entrepreneurship of black women.”



In 1952, Green retired from the postal service to become a full-time publisher. He charged enough to make a modest profit—25 cents for the first edition, \$1 for the last—but he never became rich. “It was really all about helping,” says Ramsey. At the height of its circulation, Green printed 20,000 books annually, which were sold at black churches, the Negro Urban League and Esso gas stations.

Writing in the 1948 edition, Green predicted, “There will be a day in the near future when this guide will not have to be published. That is when we as a race will have equal opportunities and privileges in the United States.” He died in 1960, four years before Congress passed the Civil Rights Act.

Green’s lasting influence, says Ramsey, “was showing the way for the next generation of black entrepreneurs.” Beyond that, he adds, “Think about asking people to open their homes to people traveling—just the beauty of that alone. Some folks charged a little, but many didn’t charge anything.”

Today, filmmaker Ric Burns is working on his own Green-Book documentary. “This project began with historian Gretchen Sorin, who knows more than anyone about the Green-Book,” says Burns. The film, he says, shows the open road as a place of “shadows, conflicts and excruciating circumstances.”

Washington, D.C.-based architectural historian Jennifer Reut, who created the blog “Mapping the Green Book” in 2011, travels the country to document surviving Green-Book

sites, such as Las Vegas, Nevada’s Moulin Rouge casino and hotel, and the La Dale Motel in Los Angeles. Much of her focus, she says, is to look at places “in the middle of nowhere. That is where it was much more dangerous for people to go.”

**A Philanthropist Drills Down to Discover  
Why Programs Work [EXCERPT]**

By Paul Sullivan

*The New York Times* | FEB. 5, 2016

Philanthropists have poured millions of dollars into improving education in the United States — paying for new buildings, buying new computers and even creating new charter schools.

Susan Crown, a member of the billionaire Crown family of Chicago, is trying something different. Two years ago, she began working with organizations that seek to foster character traits like grit, empathy and perseverance, which studies show can be determinants of future success.

But financing organizations that focus on social and emotional learning programs for disadvantaged children was just part of the effort. Ms. Crown said she also wanted to go deeper into understanding why some organizations succeeded so well.

“This is my second chapter of foundation life,” Ms. Crown said. “It’s the exact opposite of my first chapter, which was

widespread, very regional, not terribly strategic. There were a million moving pieces. This is a very focused, intentional, high-risk program.”

After examining hundreds of applications, she picked eight organizations to support and study as part of what she called the Susan Crown Exchange.

The organizations each received \$100,000. In return, she asked them to gather three times over the two-year period of the grant to dissect what they were doing and why it had proved successful. Her goal was to find the secret sauce and reveal it to other organizations trying to do similar work.

The organizations selected for the program do not offer typical after-school programs. One brings teenagers together to create, write, produce and act in musicals with themes like sexual abuse, bullying and urban violence. Another teaches inner-city students how to build wooden boats.

Yet these programs seemed to be improving the lives of the small number of participants they served. How were they doing it, and could it be replicated? [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:*

*<http://nyti.ms/1VGsOMM>*

## TECHNOLOGY

### **THE APP THAT HELPS BLIND PEOPLE SEE [EXCERPT]**

*By Anthony Cuthbertson*  
*Newsweek | March 21, 2016*

The first time Mark Edwards used Aipoly Vision, he cried. Edwards, 56 and legally blind since birth, had signed up as an early tester for the smartphone app that claims to help the visually impaired people “see” the world around them. “When it immediately told me what was surrounding me, I was completely overcome with tears of joy,” says Edwards. “That doesn’t happen very often to a middle-aged man.”

Other early users of the app have called it “game changing” and on par with self-driving cars for its potential to transform the lives of blind people. Born out of the Singularity University in California—an institution set up in 2008 at NASA Research Park to produce “exponential technologies to address humanity’s grand challenges”—Aipoly Vision combines recent advances in artificial intelligence with the standard technology found in an iPhone. The neural networks and deep learning algorithms that power it may be complex, but how it works is simple: Users point their phone at any day-to-day object and the app speaks out what it is seeing.

“When we were first coming up with the idea we spoke to 88 blind people and asked what they wanted,” says Marita Cheng, one of the app’s creators. “We found that their biggest frustration was having to ask what things are.”

Before Aipoly Vision, a visually impaired person travelling solo had only one option besides asking for help: to rely on apps that use volunteers to help identify things via video calls. But that can be time-consuming. “The thing that’s special about our app is that it’s all done in real time,” Cheng says. “Current methods require an Internet connection and can take anywhere up to two minutes. Our system can recognize three objects per second.” Bringing in a third party—like those volunteer apps do—also isn’t ideal for those who want privacy. But with Aipoly, says Cheng “no one knows what you’re looking at.”

The version of the app that Edwards is testing is able to identify around 1,000 objects and any color. An update expected to be released by the end of the month will be able to recognize around 5,000 objects. In its current form it can also distinguish between different brands and explain to the user what’s in an image printed or on a screen. What’s more, users can “teach” the app about objects it doesn’t recognize—benefiting both themselves (later on) and other users. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:*

*<http://bit.ly/1SUOxNe>*

## **Pneumatic tech could bring affordable full-page Braille tablets to reality**

By Ben Coxworth

*Gizmag.com* | January 18, 2016

Suppose you had a tablet that only displayed one line of text at a time. It would be pretty frustrating, but it's a limitation that blind users of Braille-displaying devices are faced with constantly. Thanks to new technology being developed at the University of Michigan, however, full-page refreshable Braille tablets could soon be on their way.

In existing devices that have changeable Braille displays, the individual dots making up each character are represented by small pins, each one of which is pushed up by an electric motor. Those motors take up some space, so unless the device is going to be huge, only a small number of them can be used – hence the single-line format.

Additionally, because they're so intricate and incorporate so many components, such machines typically cost several thousand dollars. By contrast, it is hoped that the U Michigan technology could result in a tablet costing less than US\$1,000.

Led by associate professor Sile O'Modhrain, the team's pneumatic system uses pumped air or liquid instead of motors and pins. Each Braille dot takes the form of a tactile bubble that forms beneath the display's rubber surface. For each new page, different combinations of those bubbles are raised to represent different multiple lines of text. As an

added benefit, a tablet featuring the new system could also display simple graphics such as charts or tables.

Although the bubbles are fed by tubes in the existing prototype, microfluidic channels would be used in the finished product – similar technology is already utilized in the Phorm iPad mini case, which causes tactile bumps to temporarily form over each letter on the tablet's onscreen keyboard display.

A somewhat similar system is under development at North Carolina State University.

### **Changing the Face of Engineering [EXCERPT]**

By Josh Logue

*Inside Higher Ed* | January 25, 2016

“From the time of their arrival in America,” writes John Slaughter in the introduction to *Changing the Face of Engineering: The African American Experience* (Johns Hopkins University Press), “African-American men and women have contributed significantly to the creation and development of many of the tools, machines and devices that have propelled America’s industrial progress and technological achievements.” They have been, in a word, engineers.

The book, which Slaughter edited alongside Yu Tao, director of gender and cultural studies at Stevens Institute of Technology, and Willie Pearson, professor of sociology at

Georgia Institute of Technology, is a comprehensive history of African-Americans working in the field of engineering and an argument that their continued underrepresentation puts the country at a severe disadvantage. It comprises 15 chapters by a variety of scholars writing from their own unique perspectives. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:*

*<http://bit.ly/1Z1pMAF>*

### **Pixar's New App Gives the Blind a New Way to Experience Movies [EXCERPT]**

By Max Savage Levenson

KQED | JANUARY 23, 2016

While we all love going to the movies, the experience often becomes a huge challenge for the blind and low-vision community when the visual aids provided by theaters are broken (or can't even be found). Fortunately, that may be about to change.

Pixar Studios is developing an app that syncs your phone with a narration track. Interspersed between segments of dialogue, it describes what's happening on-screen — characters, action, costumes — through your headphones.

Last month, Pixar threw a party at their Emeryville headquarters to test out the new app, in collaboration with Bay Area non-profits like LightHouse for the Blind, the Blind Babies Foundation and Guide Dogs. Complete with an



expansive red carpet, the event was a Gatsby-like dazzle of light and noise, flashing cameras and a whole fleet of seeing-eye dogs. The evening culminated in a screening of “The Good Dinosaur.”

There are definitely some kinks to be worked out. A large portion of the audience — sighted and non-sighted alike — had trouble downloading it onto their phones. But thanks to a few Pixar employees, looking only mildly nervous, everyone soon had it working. Lisamaria Martinez, the director of community services at the LightHouse for the Blind, explained that it offered great improvements over current visual aids. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:*

*<http://bit.ly/1W1d7zn>*

## ARTS & CULTURE

### **In Living Color [EXCERPT]**

By Emily Nussbaum

*New York Magazine* | April 18, 2016

Kenya Barris, the creator of the ABC family sitcom “black-ish,” slumped on a sofa in his airy home, in Encino, California, his eyelids drooping with fatigue. In the nearby media room, his two young sons, Beau and Kass, played Minecraft on an Xbox. In the kitchen, his wife, Rainbow, who was pregnant with their sixth child, made popcorn. Out in the hall, their three daughters—aged ten, fourteen, and sixteen—yakked and giggled. The family was getting ready to watch the West Coast airing of “Hope,” an episode about police racism which, at varying times, Barris had described to me as both “the one that ruins me” and “maybe my most important episode.” Once, with a resigned shrug, he had said, “Well, the toothpaste is out of the tube.”

Like most breakthrough sitcoms, “black-ish” is built on autobiography. It’s narrated by Andre (Dre) Johnson, a black ad executive, played by Anthony Anderson, who has jumped, as Barris did, from inner-city poverty to bourgeois wealth, only to find himself flummoxed by his brood of privileged, Obama-era kids. Tracee Ellis Ross plays his wife, who, like the real Rainbow, is a biracial anesthesiologist nicknamed Bow. With a joke velocity approaching that of “30 Rock,” the show, brassy and shrewd, stands out for its rare directness about race and class. As Barris likes to put it,

whereas “The Cosby Show” was about a family that happened to be black, “black-ish” is about a black family. In its first two seasons, the show scored laughs from such subjects as whether black parents spank more and how different generations use the N-word; there was a plot about the knowing nod of recognition black men give one another. One hilariously nervy script satirized Martin Luther King Day. (Dre, Jr., admits that he’s never read King’s speech, explaining, “I always kind of zone out when people start to tell me about their dreams.”) Some viewers, especially black ones, have been put off by the show’s title, with its cheeky implication that some people are less black than others. But Barris told me that he was glad he’d resisted ABC’s suggestions to sanitize it, titling it “The Johnsons”—or, absurdly, “Urban Family.” Michelle Obama has called “black-ish” her favorite television show.

Until “Hope,” however, the show hadn’t tangled with real-world politics. During Season One, in 2014, Barris pitched a story based on the arrest of the African-American professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., for breaking into his own home. At the time, the Ferguson riots were streaming live on the Internet; ABC asked him not to do any jokes about cops. By 2015, the national outcry about police brutality had become too loud to ignore—and “black-ish” was getting raves as part of a newly diverse TV landscape. Over the December holidays, Barris holed up in the studio attached to his home, bingeing on Red Bull and “probably some Adderall,” and hammered out “Hope.” [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:  
<http://bit.ly/23hACDK>*

## **Young African-American Muslims Share A Hidden Love In 'Naz & Maalik' [EXCERPT]**

By David Edelstein

*NPR* | January 29, 2016

Given the recent expression of anger about the lack of racial diversity in American cinema, it's nice to be able to tell you about Jay Dockendorf's very fine indie feature *Naz & Maalik*, in which the title characters are African-American teenage boys who also happen to be devout Muslims who also happen to be gay.

That's three outsider perspectives, which is a lot even for an indie. But the point is not representation for its own sake. The triple layer of alienation from mainstream culture makes for an excitingly fresh slant.

Dockendorf isn't black, but he wrote the script based on interviews with gay, African-American Muslims, and the movie has a layered, documentary-like texture. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link: <http://n.pr/1SES83k>*

**Kamoinge's Half-Century of  
African-American Photography [EXCERPT]**

By Maurice Berger

*The New York Times* | January 7, 2016

In the early 1960s, when African-American photographers were keenly aware of their isolation in a field dominated by white men, two collectives held a joint meeting. The result of that encounter was a decision to merge and form a more robust group they called Kamoinge, which in Kenya's Kikuyu language means a group of people acting together.

“We saw ourselves as a group who were trying to nurture each other,” Louis Draper, a founding member of the Kamoinge Workshop who died in 2002, once wrote. “We had no outlets. The magazines wouldn't support our work. So we wanted to encourage each other ... to give each other feedback. We tried to be a force, especially for younger people.”

To commemorate its 50th anniversary, the workshop has published “Timeless: Photographs by Kamoinge” (Schiffer), a survey of its evolving and wide-ranging work and an important contribution to the history of photography.

“We speak of our lives as only we can,” Mr. Draper wrote about the personal and individualistic perspective of Kamoinge's African-American photographers, and the book affirms that with a multifaceted, richly textured and global view of the black experience. Today, even as media depictions of people of color continue to rely on negative

stereotypes and clichés, these pictures resonate with complexity. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:*

<http://nyti.ms/1O8GKY7>

**Rock music has always been black music—  
and Prince proved it**

By Noah Berlatsky

*Quartz.com* | April 22, 2016

Black performers rarely get labeled as rock stars, but there's no question that Prince was one. That's part of why *Around the World in a Day* (1985) is my favorite of his albums. It's a retro-60s hippie rock concept statement, in which Prince swaggers up and declares, "I can be a weirder fey psychedelic badass mushroom than you, Paul McCartney." The dreamy single "Paisley Park" is one of most unique takes on rock's synthesis of lust and the children's song ever recorded. The tune toddles and hops along in a fruity McCartneyesque vein while Prince's guitar growls and snarls. "Paisley Park is in your heart," he declares, but the music insists it's also in your groin. Innocence, grit, transcendence, joy, borderline nonsense lyrics—what could be more rock and roll?

Calling Prince a rock artist is not controversial. Alongside Jimi Hendrix, and probably ahead of Chuck Berry, Prince is the world's most recognizable black rock performer, celebrated

both for his blistering guitar playing and his eclectic ability to mix white styles of rock with R&B influences.

The fact is, while rock was invented primarily by black performers, it's always incorporated a hybrid of styles. Chuck Berry borrowed Appalachian fiddle tunes; Elvis borrowed jump blues. And yet, when white artists incorporate black sources, they're treated as genius rock stars, while black performers' use of "whiter" styles is often seen as a novelty or just passed over in silence.

Al Green listened to the Beatles as surely as the Beatles listened to the Shirrelles. But when the Beatles cover the Shirrelles, it's rock; when Green covers the Beatles, it's R&B. When rock music is defined by and limited to white people, only white people get to fit in the critically acclaimed pantheon of rock geniuses. Black performers are made to seem an exception in the genre they invented. As Dee of blackrocktumblr says, "There's a level of erasure happening because the idea of a mixed America is something that doesn't sit right with many folks in America."

Prince, of course, was an innovator in every aspect of his career. His band was famously integrated, and it sounded like it—even when, as happened not infrequently, he played all the instruments himself. For Prince, there was no line between white rock music and black R&B music; he didn't so much blend the two as make it seem like they've always been indistinguishable. "Tamborine," for example, is both one of the itchiest funk tunes ever and a New Wave classic; if Kraftwerk was about dancing robots, Prince made music

that sounded like it was transforming robots into breakdancers and back again. “The Cross” from Sign of the Times makes you realize that the Velvet Underground should have really been a gospel group like the Ward Singers, and vice versa, while “Ronnie Talks to Russia,” borrows its pace and politics from punk while still being a sinewy dance rave up.

Prince’s ability to turn the Beatles into James Brown into Fleetwood Mac into Jimi Hendrix is so dazzling that it can seem singular and unprecedented. But, while Prince was absolutely a unique artist, he’s not the only black artist to take stereotypically white and supposedly black music, stir them together and make rock out of it. On the contrary, in that regard, he’s not the exception so much as the rule.

Rosetta Tharpe was spitting classic rock licks before classic rock existed, and basically invented the rock genre. Otis Redding, like Prince, fronted an integrated band, and drew from an eclectic array of influences, not least the Beatles. Minnie Riperton was flirting with folk-tinged easy listening a decade before Prince wrote “Condition of the Heart,” and about the same time as Stevie Wonder was showing Led Zeppelin the meaning of heavy. For that matter, many of Prince’s peers, from Michael Jackson to Public Enemy to Rihanna, have expressed their love of guitar solos. If Prince was crossing over to rock, then he was doing it in the company of just about every other major black artist of the last sixty years.



“Crossing over” is a particularly bad way to describe black artists who enjoy rock music. Prince’s career, influences, and collaborators scrambled expectations for who an R&B artist should be listening to, and what an R&B artist should sound like. But so did the careers, influences, and collaborators of Sly Stone, Patti Labelle, Brandy, Etta James, Sonny and Linda Sharrock, Bill Withers, Ray Charles, Valerie June, DAWN. You get the idea.

Part of Prince’s genius was that he made it so obvious that the line between “white music” and “black music” was meaningless. Listening to a Prince album, even the dullest rock critic couldn’t help notice that nothing went in the box it was supposed to.

What is “Little Red Corvette,” anyway? Motown confection? Power ballad? New-wave Marc Bolan tribute via Stevie Wonder? The artist sometimes formerly known as a symbol made it impossible for you to label him, and did so in part by insisting that the incredibly wide range of music he loved wasn’t so easily labeled either. Prince came from a long line of eccentric rock geniuses, and part of how he honored them was by forcing even the most obtuse listener to understand that rock was, and always has been, black music.

## **SPORTS**

### **Keeping the Thunder on Their Game [EXCERPT]**

By Marc Tracy

*The New York Times* | April 23, 2016

Amanda Green knew precisely why she was having lunch Thursday in a 17th-floor restaurant accessible only to guests of the luxury hotel where she and the rest of the Oklahoma City Thunder organization were staying during their first-round playoff series against the Mavericks. In a sense, knowing why is part of her job.

“It’s in the collective bargaining agreement, that you have to stay at a certain class — level of hotels,” Green said over her vegetarian lunch.

Or, to quote from Page 266: “Each Team agrees to use its best efforts” to have players “stay in first-class hotels.” (Not surprisingly, teams are also urged to find accommodations that “have extra-long beds available.”)

Green, 31, who grew up in Queens, knows the 510-page agreement between the league and the players’ union pretty well as she nears the completion of her fourth season as the Thunder’s basketball operations coordinator.

Her status makes her one of the few women in the N.B.A. with a prominent job in what is termed basketball operations. Unlike several women with important roles in business development, marketing and other aspects of the

multimillion-dollar business that is a pro basketball team, Green, in her job, centers on the game in the most granular way — like mastering the current C.B.A.

In addition to some legal duties, including handling the immigration status of foreign players, Green huddles with the general manager, scouts and others before the draft and the trade deadline. She keeps tabs on what other teams are doing. She suggests trades. She thinks strategically about the Thunder, who since arriving in Oklahoma City in 2008 from Seattle have been highly competitive but have not won an N.B.A. title.

“It’s very, very noticeable that I’m an African-American woman; can’t really hide that,” Green said. “But for them to say, ‘She does her job well,’ that’s what I want people to know me for.”

Green had long aspired to work in sports. For four years in college, she was a rare female manager for Duke’s men’s basketball team.

But years ago, an acquaintance of Green’s mother, who is a Wall Street executive, told Green that she would never make it in the front office of a professional team because the N.B.A., he said, was “an old-boys’ club.”

“Some people do think those things,” Green said. “I work hard to show that a woman can do this.”

*To access the full article, follow this link:*  
<http://nyti.ms/1UqVXKy>

**Ken Burns: Jackie Robinson 'considered radical' even by  
African-American teammates [EXCERPT]**

By Paulette Cohn

FoxNews.com | April 11, 2016

What better way to start baseball season than to honor one of its greats? And that is what PBS is doing with the premiere of Ken Burns' two-part, four-hour film, "Jackie Robinson," that chronicles the life and times of the Baseball Hall of Famer.

But "Jackie Robinson" is about more than his skill on the field. It is also about race and politics in America -- subjects we are still dealing with today.

"The story of Jackie is the story of America," says Burns, who has wanted to tell Robinson's story ever since he worked on his "Baseball" series in 1994, because he considers Robinson to be one of the most important figures in our nation's favorite national pastime.

Robinson made history on April 15, 1947, when he broke the color barrier and became the first African American to play in the major leagues as first baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Burns says Robinson wasn't the best African American ballplayer at that time -- although he did go on to later win the Most Valuable Player Award -- but he was someone who understood the importance of the task he was undertaking: integrating baseball. [...]

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*<http://fxn.ws/1WBi0OF>*

## POLITICS

### **Will the Democrats Ever Face an African-American Revolt? [EXCERPT]**

By Thomas B. Edsall

*The New York Times* | MARCH 15, 2016

Public officials — and the Democratic Party — have, in point of fact, failed to deliver housing, employment or education programs that convincingly remediate the problems of poor black families.

Barbara Sard, vice president for housing policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank, argued in an email to me that

*While interventions targeted at people in very poor places may be somewhat effective, their chances or degree of success are much more limited than if the places themselves became less poor and racially isolated. This focus on the role of place in persistent poverty is particularly important because such concentration appears to be getting much worse since at least 2000.*

This is where politically initiated solutions should begin.

The Democratic Party cannot continue to reap the electoral rewards of the black vote — or embark on a comprehensive reevaluation of life at the bottom of the economic scale —

without fundamentally reconceiving how it deals with the neighborhoods where many of its voters live.

Steps to reduce the trouble caused by extremely poor neighborhoods include the assertive use of the existing housing voucher programs to move people into “high opportunity communities,” which have poverty rates of 10 percent or less.

The existing voucher program could be expanded to cover many more than the 2.2 million low income families currently in the program.

One problem with proposals like these is that many Democratic politicians view support for a genuine expansion of affordable housing for African-Americans as likely to have a negative impact — or at least to be perceived as having a negative impact — on white communities. They see the distribution of resources away from whites to blacks as a form of political suicide.

Even in super-liberal, very Democratic Amherst, Mass. — Obama 12,316, Romney 1,872 in 2012 — residents fought bitterly against a proposal to build 26 units of moderate income housing. Their decade-long, ultimately futile battle involved “court cases, appeals, and \$150,000 worth of legal costs, despite pro bono legal assistance,” The Atlantic reported in June 2015.

In another liberal city, Seattle — Obama 279,000, Romney 46,000 — Mayor Ed Murray announced a major affordable

housing initiative on July 13 last year that included a mandatory requirement that all new development include affordable housing.

Then, on July 29, Murray did an about face. “I will no longer pursue changes,” he announced, “that allow more types of housing” in single-family zones. “Politically, the blowback has been enormous. It’s been hard for the mayor to talk about anything else,” Alan Durning, a member of the committee that produced the housing initiative, told the *Seattle Met*.

These developments suggest that African-Americans living in poor neighborhoods cannot rely on Democratic leaders to take the decisive steps needed to ameliorate the problem as long as the Democratic Party can take the black vote for granted.

The question, then, is how long can Democratic Party leaders and candidates continue to rely on African-American voters before African-American voters take matters into their own hands — just as white working-class Republican voters have done this year.

The advent of Trump may mask this situation for now, but unless the Democratic Party makes different “deliberate policy choices” — and devises a way to harness the sense of injury and injustice prevalent in many minority communities without President Obama at the top of the ticket — African-American voters may choose to abandon the ballot box or to back more radical dissidents, just as Republican rebels have



done this year. For the American center-left, even a small group of defectors would have a disastrous effect. [...]

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*<http://nyti.ms/1SHI3QI>*

## **Campaign Challenge: Fix the African American Student Loan Crisis [EXCERPT]**

By Mark Paul, Darrick Hamilton, William Darity, Jr.

*American Prospect* | March 15, 2016

This year's presidential race has spotlighted an often-overlooked aspect of the student loan crisis: the disproportionate college debt burden shouldered by African American students. The average \$71,086 price tag for higher education at a four-year public institution is already well beyond the reach of most middle-class families. But for African American students, the cost of college hits even harder. The average college debt for African American bachelor degree holders is \$37,000, compared with just \$28,051 for the average student who is white.

The problem stems from both and is compounded by racial disparities in wealth accumulation. The twin legacies of chattel slavery, when black people were economic assets, and discrimination—in particular the housing discrimination that for generations has denied African Americans access to the same generous mortgages that built so much of white wealth—have left black families with only six cents of wealth for every dollar held by the average white family. All this

makes it harder for African Americans to finance their college educations and piles up student debt on black students—which, in turn, further exacerbates the racial wealth gap.

While nearly half of white students are able to fully cover college costs with their own earnings, family contributions, and federal financial aid, only 30 percent of black students are in the same boat. Among the relatively well-off students of both races who do enroll in college, black students are 25 percent more likely to accumulate student debt, and they borrow over 10 percent more than white students. This added financial burden also makes the black students 33 percent less likely than their white counterparts to complete their degrees. Federal data show that 28.7 percent of black students who leave college after their first year do so for financial reasons. The upshot is that fewer black students begin college; even fewer graduate, and those who do graduate carry much heavier student debt loads than their white counterparts. Indeed, high college costs combined with low levels of wealth in black communities have helped push the four-year college completion rate of African Americans to less than half that of white students.

Both Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton have proposed solutions to the African American student debt crisis, but from different starting points. Their contrasting plans reflect the stylistic and ideological divide between the two candidates. Clinton's so-called College Compact appeals to education wonks with an arguably technocratic approach. Sanders's far-reaching College for All Act, by contrast,

expands both student opportunities and government's role. There's a predictable difference in the price tags, too: Clinton says her plan would cost \$350 billion over a decade, mostly thanks to expanded grants to states and colleges. The Sanders plan would cost at least \$750 billion over the same period, based on the campaign's \$75 billion-a-year estimate. He proposes funding it through a financial transaction tax overhaul that's projected to create more revenue than is needed for his college plan.

The Republican candidates, for their part, have proposed plans that would actually exacerbate the student debt crisis by cutting or eliminating the Department of Education. Such cuts would hurt economic mobility for all students, particularly African Americans, and undercut national efforts to promote an educated and productive workforce.

Of the two Democratic proposals, the Sanders plan would do the most to help black students. Sanders's College for All Act could be a selling point among African American voters, a bloc that until now has firmly favored Clinton. Clinton's plan takes a modest step toward addressing the disproportionate student debt burden on low-income students, especially African Americans. But her approach follows the conventional model of making higher education more affordable by expanding Pell Grants to low-income Americans, awarding grants to qualifying institutions that meet federal criteria, and regulating predatory loan companies. This perpetuates the means-tested, competitive, accountability-based approach toward higher education exemplified by the now-defunct No Child Left Behind Act.

Sanders, by contrast, directly tackles persistent racial inequalities by making public colleges tuition, fee, and debt free. His plan would make higher education an American right, reopening access to public colleges and universities for all students. It would eliminate tuition and fees at all public colleges and universities, by default ending the federal government's practice of raking in billions worth of profits from student loans. Sanders's plan also would cut interest rates on student loans almost in half, saving more than \$6,000 over four years for the average borrower seeking a bachelor's degree. [...]

*To access the full article, follow this link:  
<http://bit.ly/1UqQELf>*

### **When Anger Trumped Progress**

By Jon Grinspan

*The New York Times* | January 16, 2016

John Young was born into slavery, on July 4, 1855. By 15 he was a free man and an electrifying orator, recruiting black voters around his native South Carolina to the Republican Party with “pyrotechnical” rhetoric and mustache-wagging jokes. In the late 1860s, it looked as if he might help his party make real change in the post-Civil War South.

But soon Young noticed white Northerners losing interest, more concerned with corruption in Washington than freedom in Charleston. His former allies, distracted by

scandals, “just sat back” and let the South “skin us out of our rights,” he later said. By the late 1870s, anger at government had helped kill Reconstruction, punishing the most vulnerable for the crimes of the most crooked. We should be wary of this today, as we grapple with race and populist rage yet again.

Just as in the 1870s, America is struggling against racial inequity and seething at our political establishment. The two issues appear unrelated, but they have a perverse connection: Anger makes Americans dismiss government and politics altogether — and that dismissal makes it harder to tackle racial injustice.

This was certainly the case, on a far larger scale, in the 1870s, when sentiment against politicians eclipsed black political rights. Reconstruction was a moment of racial promise such as this country had never seen: A generation of former slaves became landowners, teachers, voters and elected officeholders. From 1865 to the early 1870s, the country passed constitutional amendments promising them liberty, citizenship and voting rights. Federal agents helped build schools and banks, and even crushed the Ku Klux Klan.

But reforms in the South depended on the political will of the two-thirds of Americans living outside the region to enforce them. Ohio was typical. It furnished the generals who won the war, and the politicians who made the peace. Yet Ohio was 98.8 percent white. Each reform required persuading voters in Ohio to care about John Young in South Carolina.

For a time, a majority of white Northerners supported Reconstruction. Especially in the dominant Republican Party, many let their rage at the former Confederacy push them to back greater racial equality. They were especially proud of their government: The Union that had crushed secession might genuinely improve Americans' lives, in the South and elsewhere.

Political cartoons capture this triumphant faith. In the late 1860s, artists drew black characters in Union Army uniforms — icons of the powerful nation that had won the war. Instead of using petty politicians to represent the government, cartoonists sketched the proud, classically robed Columbia (whose name endures but whose role as an avatar of strong government has disappeared).

Then came the scandals. In the early 1870s, President Ulysses S. Grant's buddies were caught stealing and bribing, speculating on gold and dodging whiskey taxes. The New York Times exposed Tammany Hall's Boss Tweed for stealing as much as \$45 million. Tweed was a Democrat, but his thefts made the entire establishment look worse.

The avalanche of corruption left Americans blaming what the reformer Lydia Maria Child called the "general cussedness of governments." The fiery Minnesota stump speaker Ignatius Donnelly went further, condemning politicians as "a genus of shysters and scalawags — small, mean, tricky little wire-pullers."

Who was blamed for white politicians' dirty tricks? Black leaders. A new type of racist cartoon emerged in the 1870s, depicting black officeholders in gaudy jewelry. Journalists sent accounts north from majority-black regions, mocking "savage" African-American leaders, comparing them to Tammany Hall bosses.

Northern whites began to give up on the idea that the federal government could or should improve race relations. Horace Greeley, once America's most influential abolitionist editor, ran against Grant in 1872, combining anger at politicians with hostility toward Reconstruction. He lost, terribly, but not before claiming that blacks "assume that they need more help from outside than they actually do."

This was how the elephant came to symbolize the Republican Party, as a criticism of an organization that looked bloated and bullying. Former slaves pictured a different beast: Their Republican Party was a war elephant, protecting them from the guerrilla campaign terrorizing black voters. The dispute questioned the fundamental role of parties in American democracy: Were they alliances, protecting the rights of constituents, or "rings," conspiring to loot the public?

Angry at politicians, and spurred by the crushing depression of 1873, voters gave the Democrats control of Congress in 1874. It was one of the largest landslide shifts in party control in American history. Reconstruction, on the ground, was mostly finished after that. Federal soldiers and agents largely withdrew from the South, and political support for

black politicians dried up. The abandonment, wrote a slave-turned-politician in Mississippi, felt “pathetic in the extreme.”

No generation of Americans had more reason to go after the crooks in government, and no generation misplaced its rage so devastatingly. But anger at politicians did not stop with Reconstruction. In the Gilded Age, faith in leadership dimmed even further. Gone was the triumphant Columbia, replaced by caricatures of thieving office seekers stuffing their pockets with public money. Government stepped back from protecting those rights it had promised after the war.

We’ve got nothing on the 1870s today. That era saw the largest terrorist conspiracy in our history, suppressing black voters and killing hundreds if not thousands, while corrupt officials stole millions of dollars. But themes from that era — suspicion of government, struggles over race — run through American history. And sometimes, one issue blares so loudly that it drowns out the rest.

In 2016, political outrage again threatens to overwhelm calls for racial change. If we’re serious about addressing ingrained inequality, from schools to prisons to workplaces, Americans will need to trust government to make reforms, and support the kind of leadership we’ve come to view so cynically. Otherwise, our tendency toward vague, angry rhetoric will discourage risk-taking, and ultimately maintain the racial status quo.



Yet our era, like the years after the Civil War, also presents a rare moment of possibility. If we keep both issues in focus, Americans might bring unprecedented racial change and clean up government. We could use the momentum of one to affect the other, joining the new crop of black activists with older white voters mobilized against business as usual. We might achieve what John Young had been working for all along.

### **The Secret History Of The Photo At The Center Of The Black Confederate Myth [EXCERPT]**

By Adam Serwer

*Buzzfeed* | April 17, 2016

The cemetery in West Point, Mississippi, is filled with leaning, weary graves, gray monuments discolored by time.

“That’s the white graveyard,” Cyril Chandler, 66, said, gesturing with a scarred hand injured in a printing press accident decades ago. “This is the black one on the other side.”

Cyril then guided me to the small stone obelisk marking the grave of his great-grandfather, Silas Chandler, a former slave who went to war alongside his Confederate master and a man who in death has become a source of controversy he could never have imagined. The Confederate flag that once flew at his resting place is gone, as is the metal cross placed there by the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy in a 1994 ceremony to

honor his “service,” complete with a 21-gun salute. According to the SCV, the cross was not an award for valor or bravery, but simply denoted that Silas was a Confederate soldier.

The ceremony was a reunion of sorts between the two Chandler families, white and black. Andrew Chandler Battaile Sr., a great-grandson of Silas’s master, said at the time that reconnecting with Bobbie Chandler, 83, Silas’s great-grandson, was “truly as if I had been reunited with a missing part of my family.” Although Bobbie and Cyril Chandler were both present, their other siblings refused to attend the event. They wanted no part of the ceremony, or the implication that Silas had served the Confederate cause willingly.

Myra Chandler Sampson, 76, Silas’s great-granddaughter, began researching Silas’s life and concluded he was no soldier, but a slave. Sampson, along with other family members, in 2008 signed a petition letter, which was later published on the website of Kevin M. Levin, a historian who has spent countless hours rebutting tales of black Confederates — and the story of Silas Chandler in particular. The letter calls the honors laid at Silas’s grave “a great insult to Silas and all of his descendants.”

“We didn’t like that Confederate flag bein’ on his gravesite and we didn’t like that iron cross,” said Sara Wims, 80, another of one of Silas’s great granddaughters.

This much the two Chandler families can agree on: Silas Chandler was there when his master, Confederate Sgt.

Andrew Chandler, was gravely wounded at the 1863 Battle of Chickamauga in Tennessee. Silas helped his injured master return home, saving Andrew's leg from amputation.

This story might have remained, like many others, just another Civil War tale passed down from one generation to the next, if it weren't for an astonishing tintype of the two men, armed to the teeth in Confederate uniforms, taken in 1861. The image has helped bolster the claims of the community of amateur historians, hucksters, and Confederate sympathizers committed to defending the Confederacy from the charge of racism, who insist that thousands of black men fought and died for the rebel cause. "Ever since the SCV posthumously honored Silas," Levin wrote in 2012, "accounts of black Confederate troops have surged in popularity."

It is a community that has grown more vocal and irate as black and white activists have successfully sought to strip Confederate emblems from places of honor around the country. After the massacre of nine black parishioners in South Carolina by a white supremacist, the South Carolina SCV defended the Confederate flag then flying on the state capitol grounds by invoking "Black Confederate soldiers" who "fought in the trenches beside their White brothers."

In this community, the two Chandlers, master and slave, have become icons of Southern virtue, proof of the benign nature of the Confederacy and the harmonious antebellum relationship between blacks and whites. Confederate websites like Dixie Outfitters sell merchandise celebrating

the “Chandler Boys” and their battle-forged friendship. Here, they say, is proof that the cause of the Confederacy was not slavery, not the eternal gospel of white supremacy, but freedom. After all, how could a racist society have inspired such loyalty from its black subjects?

More than 150 years after Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House, our perception of the Civil War and its aftermath still shapes Americans’ understanding of racism. The saga of the two Chandler families is no different, except that the finer points about Andrew and Silas — fogged by the passage of time, the fallibility of memory, and simple family loyalties — are more difficult to parse. [...]

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