Right to Ride: African American Citizenship and Protest in the Era of *Plessy v. Ferguson*

Jim Crow was a traveling intruder, a black interloper in all-white spaces. Originally, Jim Crow was a folk character featured in the rhyming games of slave children. As the black-faced minstrel character played by the white performer Thomas “Daddy” Rice, Jim Crow was an uncouth, uncultured, humorously dangerous runaway slave, insistently barging in on the white world. Jim Crow was an insistent traveler; in Rice’s performances, he could frequently be found riding in otherwise elegant trains, streetcars, and steamboats. White audiences made Rice’s minstrel performances enormously popular in the 1830s, marking the consciousness of the United States with the image of the black intruder. The racial segregation of public conveyances was designed to prevent the kind of transgression of the social order that the character Jim Crow frequently committed in minstrel performances. The name Jim Crow became synonymous with the inferior, racially segregated train cars designated for black passengers, first in the antebellum North and later in the post-war South. The Jim Crow car was the place to shunt black passengers; a place where the “uncivilized negro” of white imaginations could be prevented from mingling with whites. As one judge argued, racial segregation helped “prevent contacts and collisions” that came from “a promiscuous sitting” (*Railroad v. Miles*, qtd. in *Bowie v. Birmingham* 1019).

The career of Paul Laurence Dunbar emerged from the shadow of Jim Crow. Critics like William Dean Howells cited Dunbar as the new voice of black artistic authenticity, the pre-eminent black literary figure of his day. Like the character Jim Crow, Dunbar reminded white Americans of the legacy of slavery; reviewers commented that the “dusky singer” was the “son of slaves” (“Negro Poet”). Some even questioned whether his use of dialect and slave tales was a form of minstrelsy. However, Dunbar hoped his audiences would “differentiate dialect as a philological branch from the burlesque of negro minstrelsy” (Letter to Helen Douglass). Early in his career, Dunbar saw the use of dialect as a preservation of black language, not a joke at black people’s expense. For Dunbar, dialect could also be a site of subversion and trickery central to African American resistance and survival. The author served as a counterpoint to antebellum minstrelsy, through the nuance of his writing and the dignity of his recitations.

Writing in opposition to the images created by Rice’s portrayal of Jim Crow, Dunbar presented the eloquent expression of a generation wedged between the promises of freedom and the disappointments of segregation. His literary works often appealed to stereotypes and then complicated them, empathizing with images...
of the slave past while insisting on full citizenship in the present. Dunbar even offered an explanation for the "grins and lies" of the minstrel Jim Crow in one of his most famous poems, "We Wear the Mask"; such masked performances hid anger, disappointment, and dissent (l. 1).

While Dunbar could challenge the limitations of Jim Crow in literature, Jim Crow segregation and the boundaries of race confronted Dunbar repeatedly during his travels. Central to his success as a poet was his recitation of his work throughout the nation. A December 1895 article chronicling the life of the young poet reported that Dunbar had "gained considerable reputation as an elocutionist and lecturer" and had "spoken throughout Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and in some of the larger cities of Canada" ("Writes"). Dunbar traveled abroad to England in 1897, and continued to travel throughout the nation for recitals between 1898 and 1902. Speaking tours not only popularized Dunbar's work, but also helped him make a living. Honoraria, ticket sales, and the sale of his books during these tours supported his art and the needs of his family. Dunbar delighted audiences both black and white, but was forced to confront the demeaning practices of Jim Crow. His fame and success came as black citizenship crumbled under the weight of disfranchisement, lynching, and the federal endorsement of segregation.

How did Dunbar, dependent on travel for his livelihood, negotiate the difficulties of segregation? What strategies did Dunbar have to employ to maintain his dignity while riding with the specter of Jim Crow? Using the fragments of evidence available in his correspondence, published essays, short stories, and poetry, this paper traces Dunbar's experience with travel. While it is impossible to ascertain exactly how often Dunbar was subjected to the "Jim Crow" car, this essay gauges his response to the growing presence of segregation during his brief career. In what ways did he seek to avoid the insults of racial segregation, and how did he protest such conditions? Given the frequent comments about his appearance as "the pure negro type," did his dark skin color subject him to worse treatment than that his lighter skinned peers suffered? How did the difficulties of the road over time erode Dunbar's health? How did travel abroad contrast with the treatment he received in America? I trace his daily struggle to be one of the "best men" of the race in the face of the worst social conditions, to complicate our understandings of Dunbar's life, art, and politics.

For African Americans, difficulties on trains were almost universal. Jim Crow cars were an anathema to black travelers; from their inception, black leaders, dependent on train travel for their livelihoods, fought exclusion and the inferior conditions on trains and streetcars. Dunbar did not detail any particular awful journey in a Jim Crow car in his correspondence, but he did hint at his relief when he was not subjected to the Jim Crow car. Dunbar traveled in an age of increasing restrictions on black travelers; state by state, southern legislatures demanded the segregation of black passengers from whites. Dunbar's career required travel, and during the highpoint of his success, segregation became the law of the land.

While Dunbar did not record his recollections of riding in a Jim Crow car, the traumatic experiences of other black artists, intellectuals, and political figures demonstrate the sort of insult and indignity that Jim Crow travel always entailed. Previous generations of prominent black travelers suffered segregation and exclusion from trains across the country. Dunbar's mentor Frederick Douglass faced the violence of segregation on his abolitionist speaking tours. In 1841, "five railway workers" accosted a young Frederick Douglass forcing him
out of a car designated for white passengers and physically throwing him into the “Jim Crow Car” (“Shameful”). On a train ride through Pennsylvania, railroad officials forced Douglass to ride sitting on cargo in the baggage car. When a white passenger tried to console Douglass for being “degraded in this manner,” he replied, “they cannot degrade Frederick Douglass. The soul that is within me no man can degrade” (Washington 69).

While outspoken black advocates during the age of abolition and the Civil War contested unfair treatment on rails and city streetcars, the distaste for the growing customs of segregation went beyond the ranks of the elite. Working-class blacks in the antebellum North fought for seats on the horse-drawn streetcars of Philadelphia and New York City. The upheaval of the Civil War allowed for a legal reassessment and the abolition of Jim Crow policies on most northern trains and streetcars.

Jim Crow segregation, born decades earlier in the antebellum North, then became part of the Black Codes that restricted freed people’s mobility in the South in the wake of the Civil War. Although restrictions on black travelers were formally set aside by state laws during Republican Reconstruction, informally, segregation and mistreatment continued. Successful lobbying led to the passage of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875, which forbade racial discrimination (McPherson 508). Despite this guarantee, African Americans had increasing difficulty receiving equitable treatment, and could not predict whether they would encounter discrimination on any given journey.

The 1883 nullification of the Civil Rights Act opened the floodgates of both formal and informal discriminatory policies. African Americans contested this growing erosion of their rights. Prominent journalist and a frequent rail passenger Ida B. Wells recounted her surprise when the conductor and three white male passengers forcibly removed her from the car she customarily rode to travel from her home in Memphis to her rural schoolhouse in the fall of 1883. Wells recalled that the conductor “tried to drag me out of the seat, but the moment he caught hold of my arm I fastened my teeth in the back of his hand” (Crusade 18). Despite her attempts to stay seated, Wells was violently ejected from the car.

Increasingly, in the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s, well-dressed black ladies and dignified black men would be denied passage in first-class cars. But like Wells, black passengers across the South were resistant to unequal treatment and pressed suits challenging inequitable racial practices (Welke, Recasting 270). Inspired by the suits pressed by other African American men and women, twice Wells sued the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad when they denied her first-class seating (Diary 183). The increase in the number of suits brought by offended black passengers suggests that informal segregation was becoming more common. Confusion and chaos ruled southern trains in the decade before the Plessy decision when Dunbar was a frequent rail passenger. Regardless of economic success and social respectability, the black middle class was trapped by the double standards of separate seating. Men and women like Dunbar, the members of “better class,” strove for dignity and respectability in a country that refused to allow blacks to become part of “polite society.” Dunbar clearly supported the fight to maintain black citizenship in the face of efforts to stifle its expression. In a stirring essay, “Recession Never,” Dunbar argued that if a “suffering people relinquish one single right that has been given them . . . the capacity of the other race, encouraged by yielding, will ravage them from every privilege that they possess. Passion and prejudice are not sated by concession, but grow by what they feed on” (37).

Blacks organized to oppose the passage of state segregation laws. Dunbar saw such opposition as a crucial cause. Moved by the efforts of the Anti-Separate Coach Movement in Kentucky, Dunbar highlighted one of its outspoken leaders
as the subject of an early poem “To Miss Mary Britton.” Britton was a black educator from Lexington, Kentucky, and had, like Dunbar, been trained in racial integrated schools. Her education at Berea College, one of the only segregated institutions of higher learning in the South, instilled her with the belief that segregation was an unnecessary burden, and a boundary that did not have to exist.8 Dunbar admired the young teacher, who spoke in opposition to a proposed bill before the Kentucky legislature in 1890. He recounted that her “ringing speech . . . was heroic, though it proved to be without avail” (“To Miss”).

Central to Dunbar’s success was his recitation of his work throughout the nation, which delighted audiences but exposed the poet to the demeaning practices of Jim Crow travel.

Britton and her fellow agitators saw segregation as a step backward—a move toward the slave past. The small group produced a pamphlet detailing their protest and recounting some of the speeches they made before the Kentucky legislature. In this historic document, the Anti-Separate Coach movement leaders wrote that the battle against Jim Crow cars would aid in the effort “to redeem the wrongs which the past has inflicted upon us . . .” They argued that slavery should have earned them respect and full citizenship, not degradation.

Does not a race which has enriched our soil with her blood, watered it with her tears, and which has given the vigor and strength of her youth to build up our country’s resources, deserve better treatment? Does not the unselfish patriotism of such a race call for true and just recognition? We are conscious of our bright record. We feel that a wrong has been done us. It must be righted. We have to take up the gauntlet of moral warfare, and do not intend to lay it down until victory shall be ours. (S. E. Smith 8)

Dunbar wrote stirringly of Britton’s battle for “real liberty” and her service to “the race.” The poem was a prayer in honor of Britton to “God of the right,” beseeching him to “speed the happy day” when African Americans could benefit from “real liberty” and be “free indeed” (Martin and Hudson 282-83). For Dunbar, Britton’s efforts were essential for black Americans to enjoy full citizenship, unfettered by the stigma of slavery and the shame of forced separation. Dunbar’s poem mirrored the argument of the Anti-Separate Car Movement, which insisted that calls for segregation expressed some state legislators’ desire to revive the slave past. Despite the efforts of Britton and hundreds of others who lodged vocal protests against the bill, it became law (Wright 70).

Throughout the 1890s, African American attempts to stem the tide of segregation failed. The legal defeat of the efforts to gain equal accommodations on the rails through the Plessy v. Ferguson decision was a devastating blow. While the case endorsed “separate but equal,” in reality, conditions for black passengers, particularly on southern trains, were usually separate but never equal. Most railroads designated that the first-class cars were available to most white patrons without distinction. These elaborate “Palace” railcars provided plush seating and clean and smoke-free air, far away from the foul coal-burning engine. Unlike their European counterparts, railroads in the US did not establish elaborate distinctions between first, second, and third-class cars on trains. White passengers had access to comfortable coach seating. Except for the problem of race, “the rail car was one of America’s greatest economic and social levelers” (Alvarez ix).
The first class car was sometimes called the ladies’ car. Such a designation was not just a first-class convention but was understood as a necessary social buffer. Railcars for women and the men who accompanied them mimicked the private sphere of the idealized American home, and were established to keep white women from being forced to socialize “with strange men” (Welke, “All the Women” 9-10). But the private sphere of the ladies’ railcar also mimicked racial divides, and recreated a domestic sphere where black people were accepted only in a servile capacity.

Given that railroad investors wanted to avoid the expense of maintaining first-class cars exclusively for black use, most often the “Jim Crow” car doubled as a plainly appointed smoking car, or was just a poorly partitioned section of the smoking car. “Smokers,” as they were often described, were usually the first passenger car located behind the engine. Smoke and soot made the car hot, loud, and uncomfortable. Rough language, coarse behavior, drinking, gambling, urinating, and spitting were acceptable. Segregated riders usually had only one bathroom for both men and women. Attendants provided no water for the hot, cramped, compartment. In contrast to the plush velvet seating and ornate wood of the first-class ladies’ cars, the condition of Jim Crow cars was usually sparse, and often “the oldest car in service on the road” (Du Bois 235). Passengers who protested were often beaten or violently ejected. Black travelers who managed to tolerate the awful conditions onboard trains encountered a new set of obstacles when the train stopped and they were faced with the difficulty of finding somewhere to eat, use the restroom, or lodge overnight (Du Bois 234-35).

Although Plessy legalized segregation, state laws varied, making train travel for black riders even more challenging and unpredictable. Trains passed through multiple states, requiring accommodations to a changing racial order. While most southern rails segregated the majority of black passengers, they sometimes seated a few, elite black riders: both men and women of color who were well-dressed and well-behaved, sometimes traveling with prominent whites, and those who had special arrangements made on their behalf. Dunbar found himself in that first category during a train trip through Virginia in the fall of 1896. Boasting to his mother about his success in Washington, DC, Dunbar wrote that his travel though Virginia was “very delightful” and that he “could look out . . . from a luxurious coach all the way and did not once have to take a ‘Jim Crow’ car” (Letter to Matilda Dunbar, 15 Oct. 1896). Just four years later, however, the Virginia legislature passed a law segregating the rails; a journey through Virginia would have more likely been blighted by the specter of Jim Crow.

In many ways, travel contributed to his lingering health difficulties. Dunbar wrote of his successful trip to England that, “while I am not very well in health all goes well with me. I have caught cold and it has settled in my throat” (20 July 1897). Constant cold and bouts of pneumonia turned into a battle with chronic disease by 1899. Suffering from active tuberculosis must have made travel much more difficult for Dunbar. The disease left him physically frail, and suffering from the characteristic recurrent, rattling cough that produced bloodstained phlegm (Rothman 211). The smoke, soot, spittoons, and unsanitary conditions of segregated rail cars may or may not have been the source of his exposure to TB, but it is certain that such rough conditions did not facilitate his recovery.

Turn-into-the-20th-century medical professionals connected racial characteristics with disease. Although scientists had discovered that tuberculosis passed from person to person through contact with bodily fluid and was not caused by genetic weaknesses as they had previously thought, they still believed that African Americans were more frequent carriers. They considered black communities hotbeds for the spread of TB, and black people responsible for the spread of disease to otherwise healthy white victims. While Dunbar personally received
good care from doctors in Ohio and Washington, DC, public perceptions of disease—particularly disease in the close quarters of a train car—were shaped by fear and prejudice. In fact, fear of black disease was one of many arguments segregationists made to exclude blacks from public accommodations. A sick black passenger verified whites’ worst fears about the virulence of the black body. Dunbar’s physical need for a sleeping car or comfortable first-class seating put him in a precarious position.

Wealthy and prominent blacks often made special arrangements for travel by contacting railroad officials in advance (Welke, Recasting 273). Dunbar was no exception. He made special arrangements through his attorney, Paul R. Reynolds. Dunbar wrote twice, first asking his attorney to “push the matter with the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific” railroad, then asking again a few weeks later if there was “any further development in the [railroad] matter?” (18 May 1901, 3 June 1901). Dunbar needed some special allowances, perhaps a sleeping car set aside for his use, or he would have to change his travel plans. He clearly did not have the ability to make travel plans quickly; travel, even travel to the West, required careful forethought, planning, and special dispensation. However, in a society deeply marked by race, even these extraordinary allowances were a calculated risk, and still represented a threat to the stability of white supremacy.

Beyond the difficult logistics of travel, attempts to escape segregated cars created ethical dilemmas. Did the desire of elite black passengers like Dunbar to seek first class treatment imply a desire to escape the presence of people of their own race? Even if individuals could make arrangements to ride in first-class cars, the larger population still suffered in second-class conditions. Such arrangements were an individual choice and a performance observed by other black Americans; they functioned as both victory over the narrow and punitive system of racial classification, and acquiescence to the rules of white privilege that governed the majority. How did people who were unable to escape the Jim Crow car feel about those who did? Did other African Americans feel alienated from the men and women who sought to stay out of the car where they were seated?

Dunbar examined just such questions in “The Ordeal at Mt. Hope.” This short story published in Folks from Dixie in 1898 followed the fictional Reverend Howard Dokesbury as he traveled to the South to minister to a poor black community. The story begins as Dokesbury disembarks from the train. He is so distressed by the conditions in Mt. Hope that he immediately wants to return to the “smoky, dingy coach, or part of a coach, which was assigned to his people” (11). We can imagine that the experience of the fictional Rev. Dokesbury might have mirrored the experiences of elite black riders such as the Rev. William H. Heard, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Charleston, South Carolina. On a journey south, Heard described the “colored car” as no more than a section of the smoking car separated by a wooden divider that stopped one foot short of the ceiling. The smoke-filled car was ill-equipped with only one bathroom and no cool drinking water. “The seats were not upholstered, and there was no carpet on the floor,” which was “dusty and dirty” (Heard v. Georgia R. R. Co. 720). Rev. Heard also complained that dignified black passengers in fine traveling clothes were seated next to laborers and “train hands and laborers with their tools.” For both Heard and the fictional Dokesbury, the train was more than a part of the landscape; the segregated car was a placeholder for questions of race, place, class, and achievement.

“The Ordeal at Mt. Hope” also describes the train in classed terms. The narrator jibes that “the car he had just left was not a palace,” an implicit reference to the elaborate palace cars set aside for white passengers on southern lines (11).
He goes on to explain that not only had the rough conditions alienated Dokesbury from the car, but also “his reception by his fellow-passengers” and “his intercourse with them” did not serve to “endear them to him” (11). The “choky little engine with its three black cars” framed a story about his desire to overcome the social distance between the minister and the majority of other African Americans (11).

Dokesbury reminds us of Dunbar’s best self. The Reverend is described in a manner that was more humane, but reminiscent of descriptions of Dunbar by white critics; “Rev. Howard Dokesbury . . . was a Negro,—there could be no mistake about that. The deep dark brown of his skin, the rich over-fullness of his lips, and the close curl of his short black hair were evidences that admitted no argument” (12). Like Dunbar, the minister was a northern black man of “self-possession and self-sufficiency” born in Ohio (12). And although he felt he had little in common with poor, under-educated southern blacks, he had been encouraged “to go among his people at the South” (12).

As Dokesbury entered the town he was discouraged by dilapidated houses, scuffles in the streets, juke joints, and craps games. As the Reverend was introduced to people of the town and the dilemmas of his ministry, he questioned his connection to the people of Mt. Hope. The narrator asserted that “he had always been such a loyal Negro, so proud of his honest brown; but had he been mistaken. Was he, after all, different from the majority of the people with whom he was supposed to have all thoughts, feeling, and emotions in common?” Going beyond “am I my brother’s keeper?”, Dokesbury questioned, “are these people my brothers?” (16).

Although he was hesitant as to whether or not he would fit in among people who used “broken” English as he walked among poorly maintained homes and streets, he found common cause with the people of Mt. Hope. Even as the story detailed Dokesbury’s judgment of the degraded state of the town, the narrator was quick to point out that “years of bondage” and “the aggregation of the evils of the fathers, the grandfathers, the masters and mistresses” left the people of Mt. Hope downtrodden (21). By speaking and working “out of the fullness of his heart” (20), Dokesbury worked to redeem Elias Gray, the drunken son of his host family. The Reverend was successful in helping to turn Gray from destructive “wickedness” and in turning the town’s self-destructive behavior into rebirth through uplift, ingenuity, and thrift.

The metaphor of the train was a purposeful and powerful frame for the story; the segregated car was a microcosm, a stand-in for the segregated world in which Dunbar lived. The complexities of such as space were better understood through Dokesbury’s implicit questions. How does it feel to be in a world that segregates you despite your achievements and success? Is race simply an assignment based on the unavoidable nature of skin-color? What is the proper place for an educated black man in a segregated world? Does race transcend the limits of class, education, and language? Do privileged African Americans have a duty to stand with those who cannot escape the strictures of second-class citizenship? Should they prefer their own to the company of whites who disdain them? Do the best men have a duty to stand and fight with the least of these? Dunbar must have sought to flesh out answers to these difficult questions as he sat in innumerable Jim Crow cars, the “smoky, dingy . . . part of a coach, which was assigned to his people.”

As Dunbar’s career progressed, travel was increasingly difficult. Life on the road left Dunbar even more susceptible to the effects of his illness. Dunbar was near death at least two times following extensive travels. He had difficulty writing and corresponding with family, friends, and business contacts. At the height of Dunbar’s success, he had difficulty mustering the strength to travel or the will...
to write. A growing dependence on alcohol and the separation from his wife left him isolated. Life on the road was the only way of getting back on his feet. Over time, touring took a heavy toll on his health and his spirit. In September 1898, Dunbar wrote his mother a strained letter about another “very bad cold” and commented, “it seems like traveling doesn’t agree with me” (10 Sept. 1898).

But in the best of times, Dunbar clearly enjoyed his travels, particularly abroad where Jim Crow did not reach. In a letter from England to his mother, he joked that he no longer felt the burden of his race, “I am entirely white!” (28 Feb. 1897). Dunbar’s journey to England was a turning point in his career. He wrote of the excitement of being the toast of society, and argued in the essay “England as Seen by a Black Man” that all black Americans should have time away from the US (4). Dunbar also appears to have enjoyed his trips west to Colorado. Letters to facilitate his care and his trip were forwarded by Dr. Tolbert, and accounts of his time in Colorado fondly recall horse riding in the mountains. In the essay “The Hapless Southern Negro” (1899), Dunbar recalled views from the window of his train car as he “speeded towards Denver across the wide plains of Colorado.” The author imagined not only the “wealth and health” that Colorado offered for his consumption, but also the possibility of open land and opportunity for the poor “tragic” sharecroppers of the South who found themselves “deeper and deeper in debt” (42). Unfettered travel away from the limitations of segregation left Dunbar with a sense of hope and a sense of the possibilities for the race.

Notes

1. The “Jim Crow” rhyme was a game similar to “Ring around the Rosie” played by black children in the nineteenth century. There is evidence that this game continued to be played well into the twentieth century by the children of the Great Migration. Although most accounts of Rice’s performance begin in the middle of the rhyme, traditionally it began, “Where yo gwine buzzard, Where you gwine crow? Ise gwine down to de new ground to jump Jim Crow. Wheel around, turn around, and do jes so. Evy time you turn around, you jump Jim Crow.”

2. Lhamon writes, “Jim Crow moved like a free man . . . enjoyed the liberty of every public conveyance from steamship to bus and train, sitting where he wished. He took occupation of the public sphere.” 37.

3. Gavin Jones argues that Dunbar shows a subversive side of black dialect in the short story “The Case of Ca’line.” Jones demonstrates that “Dunbar’s poetic exploration of . . . black vernacular, especially its rituals of signifying, indirection, and ambiguity, was often structurally cunning and politically astute” (194).

4. Dunbar corresponded frequently with lawyers and agents about arrangements for and profits from his recitals. In the late 1890s Dunbar appears to be paid $25-$85 for each engagement, depending on the expense of travel and the costs of promotion. Dunbar explained that “the very wealthy people are very much interested in me and are willing to pay 50 cents admission” (Letter to Matilda Dunbar, 25 Aug. 1896). For a record of the receipts and expenditures of one recital, see Thatcher.

5. Most early reviewers of Dunbar commented on his skin color, amazed that an African American could demonstrate obvious talent without having white heritage. Dunbar was a unique figure given that most of the black intelligentsia of his day came from racially mixed heritage. For an example of a review that highlights Dunbar’s color, see “Paul Dunbar.”

6. For a closer examination of segregation in the postbellum South, see Cohen 217; McPherson 493-510.

7. The case law demonstrates that although northern blacks sued against segregation and exclusion from ships, trains, and streetcars from 1855 to the mid-1870s, southern blacks began to press suits against segregation on railroads in the late 1870s, with the number of cases increasing dramatically in the 1880s. For a closer examination, see Welke’s “All the Women”; Mack; and Minter.


9. Railroad officials argued that the irregularity of wealthy black passengers who could afford first class cars and sleeping berths meant that trains would be required to pull empty cars in order to be truly separate but equal (Welke, Recasting 268).
10. For examples of other cases where black passengers were violently attacked and ejected from first-class train accommodations, see Anderson v. Louisville; Council v. Western; Heard v. Georgia; Houck v. Southern; Smith, et al v. Chamberlain; Williams, et al v. Jacksonville.

11. For more on how white turn-into-the-20th-century physicians viewed African Americans and tuberculosis, see Harris; Hunter; and E. H. Jones.

12. Rothman notes that there was a movement in 1900 to "restrict the interstate travel of persons with tuberculosis." Although the efforts failed because of the difficulty of assessing thousands of rail passengers, there were widespread individual efforts to keep the sick off trains and out of hotels and boardinghouses (190-91).

13. Elite African Americans like those who sought to escape the Jim Crow cars occupied what Gaines characterizes as a "contradictory position as both an aspiring social class and a racially subordinate caste denied all political rights and protections, struggling to define themselves within a society founded on white dominance" (xiv).

14. Dr. Henry A. Tobey of the Toledo State Hospital in Ohio, who had cared for and corresponded with Dunbar for several years, wrote letters of introduction for Dunbar in order to provide for his lodging and care while he tried to rest and recover in Colorado. See Tobey.

Anderson v. Louisville & N.R. Co. 62 F 46. 1894.
Council v. Western & Atlantic R.R. Co. 1 I.C.C. 638. 1887.
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