

African American Women and Desegregated Streetcars: Gender and Race Relations in Postbellum New Orleans

YAMANAKA Mishio *

Introduction

On April 24, 1867, the *New Orleans Tribune*, a radical Republican newspaper owned by Creoles of color, published an article advocating for streetcar desegregation.¹ The paper expressed African Americans' frustrations with the streetcar segregation practice known as the "star" car system, which mandated that they could only ride cars marked with a star. The *Tribune* argued that the United States Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 guaranteed equality among the races, but whites were unwilling to enforce these new rules. The newspaper called for African Americans' direct action for desegregation: "It is evidently useless to depend upon anybody's action, outside of colored men themselves."² Soon, between April 29 and May 5, 1867, a number of African Americans in New Orleans demanded the right to ride, took whites-only cars, and refused to move. Among them, two women made a pivotal move. On the last day of the protest, these women rode a whites-only car at the corner of Frenchman and Greatman Streets. While all the passengers left the car, the women succeeded in convincing the driver to take them to their destination. Soon, a large crowd of African American protestors gathered on Rampart Street. This civil disobedience

* Independent scholar [yamanakm@gmail.com]. This article is a revised version of a research paper presented at the American Studies Association annual conference in 2016. The author would like to thank Michele Fletcher, Warren E. Milteer, Jr., and the anonymous referees of the *Nanzan Review of American Studies* for helpful suggestions and insightful comments. She also appreciates the generous support of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

1. This article uses the term "Creoles of color" to indicate people who belonged to a group of francophone free people of color who retained cultural and ancestral roots in France, Spain, Africa, and the Caribbean. It also uses "Anglicized blacks" to describe people of African descent who had close cultural ties to Anglo-American society. My use of "African Americans" encompasses both Creoles and Anglicized blacks. For a debate about the term "Creole," see Tregle, "Early New Orleans Society"; Domínguez, *White by Definition*; Hirsch and Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*.

2. "The Car Question," *New Orleans Tribune*, April 24, 1867.

prompted Union officials to desegregate the city streetcar system.³

Desegregated streetcars in the postbellum United States catalyzed the possibility of racial equality after slavery.⁴ The Civil War presented new opportunities for African Americans both in free and slave states. From the antebellum period, cities across the nation had imposed a variety of segregation policies. Some, such as Philadelphia, mostly barred non-white passengers from streetcars or forced them to stand by the driver. Other cities, including New York, regulated that African Americans ride in specifically designated cars. African Americans considered these rules a hindrance to freedom. In the North, they considered equal access to all streetcars an advancement from the limited rights that they had as free people of color. From Philadelphia to New York, a number of African Americans defied the rules and demanded equal access and treatment. African Americans also attempted to desegregate streetcars in the former slave states. Between 1870 and 1871, in Louisville, Kentucky, African American community members organized through their churches, marched to a streetcar stop, and entered and sat in whites-only cars in protest at discrimination in public accommodations. Through tenacious legal and grassroots actions, they achieved the desegregation of the city streetcar system. Even in former Confederate states, many streetcars desegregated after the Civil War. Historian Howard N. Rabinowitz has revealed that cities such as Nashville, Richmond, and Savannah experienced the integration of streetcars in the late-nineteenth century.⁵

This article examines postbellum streetcar struggles in New Orleans with a particular focus on African American women because of the city's importance to the United States and the impact of African Americans' successful desegregation campaigns. As New Orleans was the largest and most prosperous commercial and financial center in the Deep South, the Union Army's occupation in spring 1862 turned the city into one of the most important strategic military points during the Civil War. Because the city was under control of the Union from the early phase of the war, unlike other Southern cities, there were hardly any battles in New Orleans. This fact made the city a suitable model for presidential and federal reconstruction plans. In addition, streetcars were still a relatively new mode of mass transportation in other areas of the South. This new public space created a milieu for African Americans in New Orleans to demand their rights in order to determine future race relations. As a result, the streetcar struggles of African

3. "The Star Car Question," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, May 6, 1867.

4. I use the term "postbellum" to indicate the era between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the beginning of the twentieth century. In this article, "Reconstruction" refers to the specific period between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the withdrawal of the federal troops from the South in 1877.

5. Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 96; Zylstra, "Whiteness, Freedom, and Technology," 682; McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality*, 192–94; Norris, "An Early Instance of Nonviolence"; Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South*, 192.

Americans in New Orleans pioneered civil rights debates in the United States.⁶

Historians such as John Blassingame and Roger A. Fischer consider the New Orleans African American streetcar protests one of the few successful cases in which African Americans voiced their dissatisfaction to Union officials in the South. Other Louisiana historians have paid special attention to the community of Creoles of color and attributed New Orleans streetcar desegregation to the Creoles' francophone trans-Atlantic influence and activism. This historiographical analysis of New Orleans contributed to the notion that streetcar desegregation had continued without a major backlash until Louisiana reintroduced segregation in 1902. Yet, the emphasis on this success story has concealed the daily struggles of African Americans against those who worked to reformulate white supremacy in streetcars.⁷

New Orleans streetcars offer new insights into public spaces in the postbellum United States. Many historians have used the concepts of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation to understand race relations in public institutions.⁸ However, because streetcars remained racially integrated, and whites rode cars side by side with African Americans in New Orleans until 1902, neither the concept of *de jure* nor *de facto* segregation accurately captures the situation of the city streetcar system. At the same time, desegregated streetcars reflect more complicated race dynamics than what C. Vann Woodward described as “an unstable interlude,” that is, the period before “the old heritage of slavery and the new and insecure heritage of legal equality” were replaced by Jim Crow laws.⁹ Postbellum streetcars had no partition or designated sections for race. In this intimate space, whites actively attempted to prove their dominance to establish the postbellum racial order. As historian Michael Mizell-Nelson conceptualized, streetcar racial struggles exemplified “the most participatory form of racial apartheid.”¹⁰ Desegregated streetcars signified not only a radical achievement during Reconstruction, but also an ongoing site of racial struggles.

Historians also have traditionally focused on African Americans' streetcar struggles as a response to the rise of Jim Crow laws. August Meier and Elliott

6. Nystrom, *New Orleans after the Civil War*, 7; Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom*; Hennick and Charlton, *The Streetcars of New Orleans*, 9–10. Only a handful of cities in the South, such as Baltimore, had maintained streetcar systems prior to the Civil War. See Cudahy, *Cash, Tokens, and Transfers*, 13.

7. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*; Fischer, “A Pioneer Protest”; Rankin, “The Origins of Black Leadership in New Orleans during Reconstruction”; Hirsch and Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*; Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana*; Thompson, *Exiles at Home*.

8. Dethloff and Jones, “Race Relations in Louisiana, 1877–98”; Somers, “Black and White in New Orleans”; Rabinowitz, “From Exclusion to Segregation.”

9. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 32.

10. Mizell-Nelson, “Challenging and Reinforcing White Control of Public Space,” 2.

Rudwick argued that these boycotts were led by middle-class African American men who desired greater inclusion in American society. Blair L. M. Kelley rebutted Meier and Rudwick, arguing that turn-of-the-twentieth-century streetcar boycotts were part of larger anti-Jim Crow protests that encompassed working-class African Americans. Yet, these examinations lack detailed analysis of how African Americans struggled for equality on streetcars from the Civil War to the turn of the twentieth century. In this long fight, African Americans, especially women, became the constant targets of white racial scrutiny and agents of racial resistance.¹¹

As historian Judith Ann Giesburg has revealed, African American women played a leading role in desegregating streetcars in the United States after the Civil War. In 1863, in San Francisco, Charlotte L. Brown, a free woman of color who had migrated from Maryland, filed a lawsuit against the Omnibus Railroad Company. The company prohibited African Americans from using streetcars. In protest, Brown rode a car and insisted on staying. In 1864, the Twelfth District Court judged that streetcar companies should accommodate all passengers with no regard to race, and Brown won her case. Similar verdicts occurred in the North as well. For instance, in 1865, an African American woman named Mrs. Derry sued a streetcar company in Philadelphia after a conductor forcibly and violently removed her from a car. Her lawsuit contributed to the passing of the civil rights bill that illegalized streetcar segregation in Pennsylvania.¹²

African American women's streetcar experiences after desegregation demonstrate a new mode of gendered and racialized control of freedpeople in the postbellum United States. Postbellum city streetcars were a space where the increasing female presence collided with the masculine nature of public spaces. Historian Mary P. Ryan has discussed how women's public actions and behavior were conscribed to a gendered role as "ladies" in the nineteenth century. She also pointed out that this gendered public role was often racially exclusive to whites and used to stabilize racial hierarchies.¹³ Historian Barbara Young Welke found that railroads were one of the few venues in which middle-class African American women were able to exercise their social and gendered respectability as they took legal action to gain access to ladies' class or first-class cars.¹⁴ Streetcars were often not simply a place of respectability to which ordinary African American women sought legal access. Instead, Judith Giesberg argues that many African American women on streetcars engaged in what James C. Scott termed

11. Meier and Rudwick, "The Boycott Movement against Jim Crow Streetcars in the South"; Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Boycotts of Jim Crow Streetcars in Tennessee"; Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Boycotts of Segregated Streetcars in Virginia"; Kelley, *Right to Ride*.

12. Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 92–93.

13. Ryan, *Women in Public*.

14. Welke, *Recasting American Liberty*.

“infrapolitics,” everyday resistance that powerless people collectively forge against those who are powerful.¹⁵ However, Giesberg’s study of light-skinned free women of color failed to explain how lower-class African American women resisted racial discrimination on streetcars. Robin D. G. Kelley also used the concept of “infrapolitics” to reveal how working-class Southern women protested against the Jim Crow system in the early twentieth century. Kelley argued that during World War II, women in Montgomery, Alabama, engaged in resistance on public accommodation more than men because these women tended to commute on buses and streetcars more frequently than male passengers. These female riders were often “profane and militant” in directly demanding equal treatment from white conductors and passengers.¹⁶ Strikingly, this protest was not just a twentieth-century phenomenon, but rather a continuation of how African American women confronted discrimination from the postbellum period.

African American women’s struggles with service on New Orleans streetcars epitomized their centrality to the creation of and resistance to a postbellum racial order. In New Orleans, African American women, many of them working-class domestic laborers and non-Creoles, not only played a role in streetcar desegregation, but also contributed to maintaining desegregation by resisting and enduring white harassment in their daily lives. African American women’s plight on streetcars was often overlooked. First, African American male leaders prioritized the desegregation of other public institutions over women’s experiences of racial discrimination on streetcars. Second, historians have focused primarily on male leaders and discussed African American women only in relation to their sexuality and interracial intimacy.¹⁷ In addition, many postbellum women using streetcars did not associate themselves with the “racial self-help” ideology that emerged among middle-class African American women through church networks.¹⁸ Yet precisely because African American women riders were unable to earn respect as “ladies,” they came to the forefront of desegregation attempts asserting self-control and dignity in the everyday use of streetcars. Daily interactions between African American women and white streetcar riders in New Orleans show how the cars existed as a contested space between white dominance and African American resistance.

I: The 1867 Mass Protest and the 1868 Louisiana State Constitution

Beginning in the 1830s, streetcars functioned as essential to daily life for New

15. Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 96; Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 183–201.

16. Kelley, “‘We Are Not What We Seem’,” 77, 105.

17. See Long, *The Great Southern Babylon*; Smith, “Southern Sirens”; Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon*; Baggett, *Intimate Partner Violence in New Orleans*.

18. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 1.

Orleans residents. Early streetcars were run by private companies to connect the city with newer suburbs such as Carrollton and Milneburg. By the end of the antebellum period, city leaders installed the system within the city limits. Between 1830 and 1860, the city's population rapidly grew from 46,082 to 168,675 and desperately needed mass transit.¹⁹ In 1860, the city council chartered the New Orleans City Railroad Company to create a horse-driven streetcar system. On June 1, 1861, the company began the operation of six routes totaling twenty-six miles of track. Despite the Civil War, streetcar lines quickly expanded throughout the city. By 1867, the lines covered approximately eighty miles.²⁰ For New Orleans, the continuing streetcar expansion was visible proof of recovery from the Civil War. The *New Orleans Times*, a white conservative newspaper, sarcastically described how frequently citizens used streetcars: "People ride too much in the horse cars, and travel too little on their feet. This is equally true of men, women and children."²¹

Streetcars daily reminded African Americans of racial inequality. While antebellum streetcars either excluded African Americans or occasionally arranged cars designated for them, the New Orleans Railroad Company explicitly mandated that African Americans must "ride in all cars having Stars painted on the sides."²² This segregation system was commonly known as the star car rule. The Union occupation that began in the spring of 1862 did not change this regulation, which symbolized limited freedom after slavery. The star car system disadvantaged African American riders in multiple ways. First, the infrequent operation of star cars imposed more waiting time on African American users. In 1865, the *New Orleans Times* reported that the ratio of streetcars was "two white cars to one star car."²³ Second, whites were allowed to use star cars at their own convenience. In 1867, the *New Orleans Republican*, the white Republican organ, observed that "the white portion of the traveling community are constantly in the habit of crowding into the star cars, to the almost total exclusion of the colored people."²⁴ Third, the star car system allowed white dominance over African American passengers. In 1865, Robert I. Cromwell, an Anglicized black physician working for the Union Army, reported to the *New Orleans Tribune* that white officers assaulted him

19. Campbell Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 27, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html>.

20. Thomas Ewing Dabney, "Mid-Century," 4-7, in *Public Service of New Orleans* (unpublished manuscript), Thomas Ewing Dabney Papers, Mss229, Box 11, Folder 1, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University.

21. "People Ride too Much," *New Orleans Times*, September 3, 1865.

22. J. B. Slawson, "Special Notices," *Daily Picayune*, June 20, 1861.

23. "Suggestions," Town Talk, *New Orleans Times*, September 29, 1865.

24. "The Star Car Question," *New Orleans Republican*, April 30, 1867.

because he attempted to ride a white car.²⁵ The system discriminated against African American women as well. The *Daily True Delta*, another white newspaper, noted that African American women were unable to find seats, reporting, “We . . . bear witness to the fact that colored women have been obliged to stand up the greater part of the time, the seats being filled by whites.”²⁶

Daily humiliation on streetcars paved the path to a mass protest in spring 1867. On April 29, 1867, William Nichols, a Virginia-born Anglicized black painter, rode a whites-only Bayou Road streetcar on Canal Street, the city’s main street. Edward Cox, the white starter of the car, demanded that Nichols disembark, but Nichols refused to move. He was then arrested and taken to court. The *New Orleans Tribune* hoped that the court would abolish the star car rule.²⁷ However, the judge argued that “there was no connection between the arrest and the question of equal privileges to all persons in all of the streetcars,” and released Nichols for no evidence of misdemeanor.²⁸ Nichols’ civil disobedience ignited further protests against the star car rule. On May 3, 1867, Philip Ducloslange, a Creole Union soldier, rode a whites-only car on the St. Charles and Baronne Streetcar line. The following day, a group of African American men rushed to a whites-only car in the Marigny neighborhood. Among them, Joseph Guillaume, a young Creole cigar maker, seized a mule to stop the car. On May 5, a third group of African American protestors gathered at the intersection of St. Charles Avenue and Felicity Street and demanded that the New Orleans Carrollton Railroad Company abolish star cars. While news accounts mostly focused on male protestors, women also contributed to the demonstration that shaped the postbellum streetcar policy. On the morning of May 5, two African American women took a whites-only car at the intersection of Frenchman and Greatman Streets. White passengers unhappily got off the car, but these women insisted on staying until they persuaded the driver to operate the car to their destination. The following afternoon African American protestors assembled on nearby Rampart Street. Consecutive outbreaks of direct protests compelled Mayor Edward Heath and General Philip Sheridan to order the integration of streetcars for fear of a citywide race riot.²⁹

25. “News of the Day. The Star Car Nuisance,” *New Orleans Tribune*, June 25, 1865.

26. “The City Cars,” *Daily True Delta*, September 24, 1865.

27. “The Car Question,” *Local Intelligence*, *New Orleans Tribune*, April 30, 1867.

28. “The Star Car Question,” *Local Intelligence*, *New Orleans Republican*, May 1, 1867.

29. “The Star Cars,” *New Orleans Tribune*, May 4, 1867; “Excitation dans les Chars,” *Chronique Locale*, *New Orleans Tribune*, May 5, 1867; “Riotous Conduct in the Second and Third Districts,” *Local Intelligence*, *New Orleans Times*, May 5, 1867. The *Times* described that Guillaume took the reins from the driver and tried to drive the car. J. M. Reid to Edward Heath, May 5, 1867, Beauregard (Pierre G. T. and Family) Papers, Mss601, U:10, Box 1, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections (LLMVC), LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; “The Star Car Question,” *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, May 6, 1867. New Orleans experienced a race riot in July 1866. The army’s immediate response to streetcar

The successful streetcar segregation protests motivated African American political leaders to ensure equal access to public accommodation through the new state constitution. The *New Orleans Tribune* reported that schools, railroads, and steamboats remained segregated, and advocated for the complete desegregation of all public institutions.³⁰ In the summer of 1867, African American leaders such as James H. Ingraham and P. B. S. Pinchback, both Anglicized blacks, pushed the state Republican Party to adopt a radical platform that included equal political representation between whites and African Americans and the enforcement of “perfect equality under the law to all men without distinction of race or color.”³¹ At the state constitutional convention held between late November 1867 and early 1868, fifty African American Republican members including both Creoles of color and Anglicized blacks were elected compared to forty-eight white representatives. In addition to their numerical advantage, African American delegates attended the convention more frequently than their white counterparts. As a result, they held an average 57 percent majority throughout the convention.³² With this political power they passed Article 13 of the state constitution:

All persons shall enjoy equal rights and privileges while traveling in this State, upon any conveyance of a public character, and all business places or otherwise, carried on by charter, or for which a license is required by either State, parish or municipal authority, shall be deemed places of a public character, and shall be opened to the accommodation and patronage of all persons, without distinction or discrimination on account of race or color.³³

The constitutional convention made streetcar segregation illegal in Louisiana. This article set a broad definition of public space, including that all facilities of public “character” be desegregated. The spring 1867 streetcar protest underwrote a strong legal foundation that promised African Americans equal access to all public accommodation.

protests reflected its concerns of more violence. See Hollandsworth, *An Absolute Massacre*.

30. “The Public Schools,” *New Orleans Tribune*, May 9, 1867; “The Right to Public Conveyances,” *New Orleans Tribune*, July 16, 1867.

31. “Radical Republican Convention. Reports of the Committee on Platform. Majority Report,” *New Orleans Tribune*, June 18, 1867.

32. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 113.

33. *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention, for Framing a Constitution for the State of Louisiana*. New Orleans: J. B. Roudanez & Co., Printers to the Convention, 1867–1868, 125.

II: Gender and Race Relations on Desegregated Streetcars

White New Orleanians responded in various ways to the elimination of the star car system. Many considered it another blow to their antebellum regime. On May 4, 1867, Edward Clifton Wharton, a New Orleans journalist, complained to his friend Sophie Richardson that “black and white are to be thrown together in the cars” in his native city.³⁴ On May 10, 1867, Auvignac Dorville, a white Creole plantation manager in the Gentilly suburb of New Orleans, wrote his employer Anatole de Ste-Gême about the spring 1867 mass protest and feared that the Union Army would “deplete the little that remains to us.”³⁵ However, white New Orleanians continued using streetcars. The *New Orleans Crescent*, a white local newspaper, predicted that streetcar lines would suffer economic damage due to fewer white riders. In fact, the paper observed little difference in the streetcar company’s average revenue after desegregation.³⁶

Yet many white New Orleanians openly attempted to reverse the new rule. Some companies attempted to continue running star cars. On May 10, 1867, a group of African American men saw a star car operating on Carondelet Street and refused to ride the car. White passengers also targeted African American passengers on desegregated streetcars. In late May 1867, fifteen white Union soldiers rode a streetcar and shot Robert Spradly, an African American passenger. Others sought a means to resegregate cars through legislation. In fall 1868, at the state Democratic Party convention, delegates from Orleans Parish argued for star car reintroduction. Furthermore, the *Daily Picayune*, the major white newspaper in the city, argued that star cars would work again if whites refrained from taking cars designated for African Americans.³⁷

In addition to the policy change on streetcars, in Reconstruction New Orleans, the increasing number of female riders added another layer of social concern. Men often considered streetcars unfit for women because of physical contact and

34. Edward Clifton Wharton to Sophie Richardson, May 4, 1867, Edward Clifton Wharton Papers, Mss1553, Box 2b, Folder 14b, LLMVC, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

35. Auvignac Dorville to Anatole de Ste-Gême, May 10, 1867, Ste-Gême Family Papers, Mss100, Folder 425, Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection.

36. “The Effect of the Abolition of Star Cars on Receipts,” *New Orleans Crescent*, May 24, 1867.

37. “Concluded Not to Ride,” *The City, Daily Picayune*, May 11, 1867; “Negro Shot in a Street Car,” *Local Intelligence, New Orleans Crescent*, May 21, 1867; “Shooting Affair Last Night,” *The City, Daily Picayune*, May 21, 1867; “The Negro Shooting Affair,” *Local Intelligence, New Orleans Crescent*, May 22, 1867; “Shooting in a City Car-The Act Committed by U.S. Soldiers,” *Local Intelligence, New Orleans Tribune*, May 22, 1867; “Democratic State Convention. Second Day’s Proceedings,” *New Orleans Crescent*, November 18, 1868; “Equal Rights in the Cars,” *Daily Picayune*, October 27, 1868.

threats. Reckless driving caused frequent accidents for women and children. Cars were also routine sites of crimes ranging from pickpocketing to shootings. Critics also noted that women's wide dresses and their accompanying children took up additional space. Men often showed women disrespect. In the postbellum period, numerous newspapers warned men to act as gentlemen and refrain from smoking and using profanity in front of women. When cars were overcrowded, men ignored conventional etiquette and refused to yield their seats to women.³⁸ The *New Orleans Times* advised that "young ladies with bundles ought not to expect gentlemen to give them their seats, unless they are personal acquaintances."³⁹

The end of the star car system affected gender dynamics on public transportation. The fear of racial intimacy boosted the image of violent and unruly African American men among white passengers. White newspapers repeatedly insisted that African American soldiers were threats to white women. On April 2, 1869, the *New Orleans Crescent* reported that allegedly drunken soldiers from the Thirty-Ninth Infantry took a car on Prytania Street and shouted rude comments at passengers, including women.⁴⁰ In June 1870, the *Daily Picayune* also described African American militia members' quarrel with a streetcar driver. The article continued that these soldiers came close to using their pistols even as many female passengers cowered inside the car. The paper commented, "how imminent was the danger may be imagined."⁴¹ Whites depicted African American male civilians as inappropriate intruders as well. White newspapers routinely reported instances of drunken and ill-mannered African American men. On July 9, 1872, for instance, the *Daily Picayune* wrote that a group of intoxicated African American men rode a car and forcibly shoved women and children from seats. The *Picayune* lamented that the police failed to arrest these men.⁴² Thus the white public strengthened their belief that desegregation caused them to suffer.

Despite new struggles on streetcars, after 1868, African American leaders quickly moved their attention from streetcars to other public institutions. While

38. There are countless articles that reported streetcar accidents such as individuals run over and injuries due to unexpected stops. For instance, see "Accident," The City, *Daily Picayune*, December 16, 1868. As for crimes, for examples, see, "Attempt to Kill," The City, *Daily Picayune*, August 28, 1868; "Pickpockets," The City, *Daily Picayune*, June 4, 1870. For more on women's dresses and men's behavior toward female passengers, see "Things Generally," The City, *Daily Picayune*, May 24, 1867; "Chapter on Discourtesy," *Daily Picayune*, February 6, 1870; "Au Revoir Papers—No. 7," *New Orleans Times*, December 17, 1865; "Police Items," The City, *Daily Picayune*, September 20, 1867; "No Title," *New Orleans Tribune*, December 31, 1868; "Ladies and Street Cars," *Daily Picayune*, May 4, 1867.

39. "Street Car Hints," *New Orleans Times*, May 30, 1875.

40. "City Topics," *New Orleans Crescent*, April 2, 1869.

41. "A Word in Season," *Daily Picayune*, June 16, 1870.

42. "An Outrage by Negroes," The City, *Daily Picayune*, July 9, 1872.

streetcars remained desegregated, white New Orleanians attempted to preserve exclusion in other institutions. Public schools became an intensive battleground, as the city school board maintained whites-only schools and openly defied the new constitution. The board was one of the few persisting institutions exclusive to whites, and African American leaders devoted much of their power and time to reorganizing the school system. Likewise, long-distance public transportation services largely continued to be segregated. The *New Orleans Tribune* called streetcar segregation “a minor one” and advocated for desegregating these other public institutions.⁴³ African American leaders in particular suffered discrimination on railroads. In 1871, for instance, the New Orleans and Mobile Railroad denied legislators Felix C. Antoine, a Creole man of color, Benjamin Geddes, and William G. Johnson, both Anglicized blacks, access to a non-smoking car.⁴⁴ In response to these hardships, during the legislative sessions between 1868 and 1871, African American politicians attempted to pass numerous civil rights bills to ensure African Americans had access to all public facilities and continuously sued the school board, transportation companies, and commercial facilities. The *New Orleans Tribune* and the *Weekly Louisianian*, owned by P. B. S. Pinchback, both supported these African American political efforts, but rarely reported on issues regarding streetcar discrimination. Compared to persistent white resistance in schools and railroads, African American leaders considered streetcars a solved issue.⁴⁵

Male leaders’ support for middle-class women also diverted their attention from streetcars to steamboats. In Reconstruction Louisiana, married middle-class African American women, whose families could afford their long trips, played a prominent role in desegregating steamboats. In spring 1867, the *New Orleans Tribune* reported that Lydia Wilkinson, an African American woman, sued the

43. “The Public Schools,” *New Orleans Tribune*, May 9, 1867.

44. “Common Carriers,” *Weekly Louisianian*, July 13, 1871.

45. Between 1868 and 1871, African American legislators attempted to enforce school desegregation by integrating the city school system with that of the state. In addition, they sued the city school board for violating the state constitution. Beginning in January 1871, schools admitted both black and white children. Between 1871 and 1877, about one-third of the city schools became desegregated. Harlan, “Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools during Reconstruction”; Fischer, *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana*, 110–21; Vincent, *Black Legislators in Louisiana during Reconstruction*, 88–92. African American legislators also struggled to implement Article 13 by passing bills that would enable the state to punish violators of the constitution. The proposal, however, was refused by Governor Henry C. Warmoth. See Fischer, *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana*, 64–73; Vincent, *Black Legislators in Louisiana during Reconstruction*, 92–97. The prime objective of both the *Tribune* and *Weekly Louisianian* was the passage of civil rights bills. See, for instance, “The Social Equality Bill Again,” *New Orleans Tribune*, February 10, 1869; “Senator Revels and Mixed Schools,” *Weekly Louisianian*, February 23, 1871.

captain of the steamboat *A. G. Brown* because she was refused access to a female passenger cabin.⁴⁶ A Creole woman of color won her case by proving her respectable position as an economically affluent, educated free woman of color. In June 1872, Josephine Decuir sued captain John G. Benson for refusing her a first-class cabin on the steamboat *Governor Allen*. Decuir was the widow of a free person of color who owned sugar plantations in Pointe Coupée Parish. Emphasizing that she was a wealthy, sophisticated woman of mixed-race descent, Decuir gained support from male Creole leaders such as Pierre G. Deslonde, a delegate to the 1867–1868 state constitutional convention. At the Louisiana State Supreme Court, the judge traced her ancestral lineage and recognized her as a highly regarded woman of color. Based on this observation, the judge decided that Decuir was discriminated against solely based on her color. She won her case but the United States Supreme Court reversed the decision in 1878. African American male leaders supported these steamboat struggles, as these women shared the same concerns about long-distance trips.⁴⁷

III: African American Women and Streetcars

In postbellum gender and race dynamics, African American leaders often overlooked the plight of streetcar users. However, working-class African American women depended on streetcars for their social and economic lives. In New Orleans, many working-class African American women were freedpeople who engaged in domestic service as nurses, maids, cooks, and washerwomen, because skilled labor and river-based jobs were considered men's occupations. While grasping accurate numbers of these working-class women is difficult, it is certain that they outnumbered middle-class women who had been free prior to the Civil War.⁴⁸ African American domestic workers commuted on streetcars to their

46. "The United States vs. Aldolph H. Steward," Local Intelligence, *New Orleans Tribune*, May 1, 1867.

47. *Mrs. Josephine Decuir v. John G. Benson*, 27 La. Ann. 1 (1875), 166–216, Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Archives (Mss 106), Louisiana and Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans. After the State Supreme Court's decision, the *Decuir* case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court. The court reversed the State Supreme Court's decision as it considered steamboat trips on the Mississippi River interstate commerce, and therefore outside the jurisdiction of state law. *Hall v. DeCuir*, 95 U.S. 485 (1878).

48. Smith, "Southern Sirens," 160; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*. In 1860, the number of slaves (14,484) outnumbered free people of color (10,939) in New Orleans. In addition, the Union occupation of the city attracted slaves who had run away from nearby plantations. Formerly enslaved women often worked for the Union Army. These groups of people consisted of the working-class African American population in postbellum New Orleans. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*, 221, 50–51; Illingworth, "Crescent City Radicals," 202–14.

employers' houses. Before 1867, streetcar companies allowed African American women to ride in a whites-only car only when they accompanied white families as nurses and maids.⁴⁹ For postbellum African American women, riding desegregated streetcars independently symbolized a new freedom. After work, these female workers brought baskets full of leftovers that they had prepared on the ride home. The *Daily Picayune* described a typical scene of city streetcars in the evening:

At Julia street a negro woman enters the car with a small sized basket, which seems to be well filled; at St. Joseph two colored females come in, both with baskets; at Clio another, and at Euterpe three more—all with the invariable basket These are cooks returning home after their day's labor, and the baskets contain a conglomeration of food . . . It will have been observed by house-keepers that nine-tenths of the colored women who answer the advertisement for "a good, competent cook," must go home at night. They say that they are married, and their husbands expect them home. They are "independent as wood sawyers."⁵⁰

Streetcars enabled the African American female worker to define her way of life. The distance of her residence from her workplace helped create a sense of independence and advancement from the age of slavery. In addition, newspapers often emphasized that African American women passengers dressed well, exemplifying their efforts to earn social respect.⁵¹ Robin D. G. Kelley framed public accommodations as "moving theaters," which served both as "a site of performance and a site of military conflict."⁵² Yet, streetcars were more than a stage. African American women strove to establish their social dignity by riding streetcars on their own.

Conflicts on the cars took various forms, from unwelcomed scrutiny to physical domination. White newspapers, in particular, alienated African American women by caricaturing their physical appearance and scorning their attitudes and manners. In July 1867, the *Daily Picayune* depicted one scene from a daily streetcar operation. The newspaper reporter denigrated one female African American rider as "fat" and "very black" and continued:

As she entered, taking a view of the position, with an eye of an astute tactician, she appeared at once to settle on a point of attack to secure quarters for herself. Near the end of the car were seated two fashionably dressed young men. There was a little space between the two, and in the twinkle of an eye our new arrival deposited her

49. "Equal Rights in the Cars," *Daily Picayune*, October 27, 1868.

50. "Those Baskets," *Daily Picayune*, February 24, 1873.

51. See, for instance, "Indignant 'GAL'," The City, *Daily Picayune*, January 17, 1868.

52. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem'," 103.

adipose frame with a squeeze, that threatened total annihilation, between the two, almost completely obscuring the two young gents beneath the widespreading folds of gaudy calico with which she was enveloped. An illy smothered giggle reverberated through the car.

In addition to the interest in her weight, skin color, and fashion, the reporter mocked the woman's action as unsophisticated and yet called it a "masterly *coup d'état*."⁵³ The malicious tone of the newspaper article conveyed that African American women were ill-suited to sharing public space with whites.

White streetcar riders also aggressively exerted dominance over African American women. White male riders routinely refused to offer them seats. On June 27, 1871, for instance, an African American man attempted to give a seat to a mulatto woman on an overcrowded Carrollton streetcar. When he stood up, a "rude young white man" took the seat with disregard to the woman.⁵⁴ Interestingly the *Daily Picayune* criticized the white man's action, but this disrespectful attitude was common. The *New Orleans Tribune* also reported one occasion in which an intoxicated white female rider attempted to take a car on the Magazine Streetcar line. She asked a driver, "whether 'there were any negro women there'," indicating her refusal to ride a car with African American women.⁵⁵ African American women became the particular targets of white resentment in desegregated streetcars.

African American women strove to establish their status as "ladies" in response to such everyday harassment. Having a seat in a crowded streetcar was a visible sign of respect in a public accommodation. These women directly and publicly expressed their demands. On January 17, 1868, the *Daily Picayune* reported that "a quadroon girl," who was "dressed with great neatness and taste," rode a car on the Magazine Streetcar line. Union officers occupied the seats, and she stood all the way to her stop. At the end of her trip, she shouted at them, "'Every car is now so filled with Yankees that a Southern hairdresser can't get a seat, and must stand up.'"⁵⁶ In another instance, in February 1869, a woman of "bright yellowish color" took a streetcar whose occupants included the Ohio native and future Republican Governor Henry Clay Warmoth and his staff. Unable to secure a seat, she said, "Isn't some one [*sic*] going to give me a seat?" When nobody offered her a seat, she continued, "'It's my opinion' . . . 'that no gentleman would 'low [*sic*] a lady to stand up in a car.'"⁵⁷ These newspaper reports emphasized southern hostility toward northerners, but these women also expressed their passion for

53. "Car Incident—A Squeeze In," *Daily Picayune*, July 31, 1867.

54. "No Title," *Daily Picayune*, June 28, 1871.

55. "Talking and Acting," *New Orleans Tribune*, October 29, 1867.

56. "Indignant 'GAL'," The City, *Daily Picayune*, January 17, 1868.

57. "No Title," *Daily Picayune*, February 3, 1869.

equality. In particular, they asserted their rights to ride without male support or guardianship. Observing this attitude, the *Daily Picayune* stated, “The feminine portion of the black community appear[s] to be even more jealous of their rights and privileges than the embryo politicians of masculine persuasion.”⁵⁸

After Reconstruction, African American women rarely appeared in white newspapers in relation to streetcars, and seemingly white criticism of them declined. Despite the resurgence of the Democratic Party and its successful white supremacy campaign in Louisiana at the end of Reconstruction, white New Orleanians hardly complained about sharing space with African American riders. This fact, nonetheless, did not guarantee that African American women safely rode streetcars every day. In January 1879, for instance, the *Daily Picayune* ran an advertisement from a man named John Meyer that called for witnesses to an accident on the Rampart and Dauphine Streetcar line on December 26, 1878. The victim was an African American woman seeking remedy from the Second District Recorder Court. Meyer urged that these witnesses “will confer a favor to the driver.”⁵⁹ Although the details of the accident are unknown, he sought public comment to disadvantage this victim.

By the turn of the twentieth century, streetcars had become an integral part of city life. In 1900, the city’s population grew to 287,104, and the streetcar lines covered 177.2 miles. The city had replaced horse and mule-driven cars with electric ones in the 1890s, and more and more people rode the lines.⁶⁰ Despite massive changes, whites’ rudeness toward African American women persisted. In October 1900, F. P. Hawes, a leader of the Central Trade and Labor Council, remarked that he observed “a big fat negress trying to wedge in a space of 9 inches between two men in a streetcar,” and “one of the men shoved her clean across the car.”⁶¹ African American women took streetcars at their own peril.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Louisiana moved to legalize streetcar segregation in New Orleans. Since the end of Reconstruction, white New Orleanians had been attempting to reestablish their superiority through segregation of other public institutions. In 1877, the city school board segregated all the public schools. In 1890, the Louisiana state legislature passed the separate car act for railroads. In May 1896, Homer A. Plessy, a Creole man of color native to New Orleans, appealed the unconstitutionality of the Louisiana separate car act at the United States Supreme Court and lost. The *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, the official Democratic Party organ in New Orleans, rejoiced that “the principle of the

58. “Car Incident—A Squeeze In,” *Daily Picayune*, July 31, 1867.

59. John Meyer, “A Card,” *Daily Picayune*, January 5, 1879.

60. Gibson, “Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States”; Hennick and Charlton, *The Streetcars of New Orleans*, 224.

61. “Separate Cars on Local Lines,” *Daily Picayune*, October 18, 1900.

'Jim Crow' car is now finally established in this State."⁶² The verdict devastated the Creoles' community activism, as they lost significant organizing power. Influenced by the result of the *Plessy* case, in 1900, state legislators proposed streetcar segregation. While this attempt initially failed, white civic leaders organized themselves to pursue legal streetcar segregation.⁶³

In 1902 the Louisiana state legislature passed a bill to segregate New Orleans streetcars, but white residents expressed ambivalence toward the expansion of the Jim Crow rule. Many opposed the bill, arguing that streetcar segregation would not be feasible because of the considerable interracial population in the city. They further argued that granting conductors authority to determine a passenger's race would be unconstitutional.⁶⁴ This fact was no demonstration of New Orleans' relaxed racial attitude. In reality, the white public disagreed with the bill, as they wanted access to all streetcar seats. The new streetcar bill mandated companies to install a sign to separate the races within the car. The company then installed fixed-wire screens to divide cars. White New Orleanians argued that this regulation would limit seats for whites. In November 1902, the *Daily Picayune* reported, "The operation of the race separation law has caused . . . a vast deal of dissatisfaction among the white people, who are forced to stand while the negroes enjoy seats."⁶⁵ When the city began installing small, movable screens to its cars, white public opposition to streetcar segregation dissolved. The white public did not consider African American opposition to streetcar segregation.⁶⁶

The ever-increasing predicament on streetcar discrimination drove working-class African American women to act. In July 1902, Nellie A. Murray, an African American caterer who resided in the uptown section of New Orleans, wrote a letter to the *Daily Picayune*. Murray expressed her dissatisfaction with streetcar segregation and reported that her community was organizing a protest. She wrote, "a movement is now on foot to organize and raise sufficient funds to procure conveyances for our people, so that they may avoid riding in the screened cars, and I will aid, financially and otherwise, in making this a success."⁶⁷ Murray's audacious letter to a white newspaper exemplified African American women workers' determination to refuse any further humiliation.

Middle-class African American women also joined protests. On July 30, 1902, Ella Robinson, P. Thompson, O. B. Benton, Kate Price, and S. A. Gates hosted a

62. "The Separate Cars for the Races," *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, May 19, 1896.

63. The *Plessy* case was planned and carried out by a group of Creole men of color who formed the Citizens' Committee and published its organ, the *Crusader*. Both organizations halted their activities at the end of the case. Medley, *We as Freeman*; Mizell-Nelson, "Challenging and Reinforcing White Control of Public Space," 100-106.

64. "The Separate Street Car Bill," *Daily Picayune*, June 2, 1902.

65. "Outrages of the Jim Crow Law," *Daily Picayune*, November 6, 1902.

66. Mizell-Nelson, "Challenging and Reinforcing White Control of Public Space," 131-32.

67. "Protest against the Separate Car Law," *Daily Picayune*, July 27, 1902.

mass meeting at the Masonic and Odd Fellows' Hall in New Orleans. They were members of the Esther Chapter No. 1, a local Order of the Eastern Star. The organization successfully garnered support from approximately sixty social, labor, church, and fraternal clubs to form a group for an anti-Jim Crow streetcar campaign.⁶⁸ While the Esther Chapter members were middle-class, they shared the same concerns about streetcar discrimination as the working-class women hoping to provide a better public environment for their children. At the convention of the Southern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs held in December 1902, S. A. Gates remarked that "heredity and environment" were the responsibility of mothers to children, and they need to "make it as pleasant as possible for them in childhood."⁶⁹ Using Robin D. G. Kelley's words, these organizing efforts represented a culmination of "daily confrontations" that pushed women to "blatant acts of resistance."⁷⁰ Streetcar segregation unified both working-class and middle-class women to join these streetcar boycotts. When the segregation order was implemented in November 1902, a large number of African Americans avoided city streetcars. The *Daily Picayune* observed that "about half as many negroes are riding in the cars."⁷¹ When African Americans chose to ride they stood on the platform next to the driver's seat to avoid the section designated for African American passengers. Some organizations even withheld social events that required transportation in order to continue boycotts.⁷²

The boycott campaign failed to pierce the color line. The Esther Chapter eventually yielded its leadership to male-dominated organizations such as the New Orleans Ministerial Alliance and the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist newspaper edited by Dr. I. B. Scott. Blair L. M. Kelley argued that there was social pressure for women to abandon their leadership role to men.⁷³ In addition, after the initial boycott, the African American community was unable to launch its own transportation service. Furthermore, African American leaders struggled to establish their own platform to call for the continuation of the protest. In addition to the failure of the *Plessy* case, the New Orleans African American community had experienced the Robert Charles riots two years prior to streetcar segregation, during which numerous African Americans became the victims of white violence across the city. The damage from the riots might have still impacted the African American leadership. The *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, in spite of its initial interest, could not motivate African Americans to avoid

68. "Negro Mass Meeting," *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, July 27, 1902; "Negroes Take Action," *Daily Picayune*, July 31, 1902.

69. "Women's Clubs Federation," *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, January 8, 1903, also quoted in Kelley, *Right to Ride*, 107, fn. 59.

70. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem,'" 103.

71. "Screens Separate the Races in Street Cars," *Daily Picayune*, November 4, 1902.

72. "Negro Entertainments," *Daily Picayune*, December 3, 1902.

73. Kelley, *Right to Ride*, 108.

streetcars and remained moderate about transportation issues. Without a sustainable foundation, the boycott waned. This activism, nonetheless, showed that women played a central role in the anti-segregation resistance.⁷⁴

Conclusion

In postbellum New Orleans, streetcars were prime sites of racial struggles. While officially desegregated between 1867 and 1902, the lines were far from peaceful. Whites asserted control of the space to reconstruct racial hierarchies. Daily observations of streetcar operations show that white New Orleanians sought dominance by failing to respect African American women riders by deriding their bodies and behavior. In addition, African American male leaders often neglected streetcar discrimination because they prioritized more imminent political issues such as schooling and railroad transportation. At the same time, streetcars were essential to the lives of many African American women, many of whom were working-class, in postbellum New Orleans. Riding desegregated streetcars ensured their independence and economic freedom. In their struggle against segregation, African American women fought against discrimination daily. They insisted on riding streetcars and asked for equal treatment. When streetcar segregation became a reality again at the turn of the twentieth century, they initiated the boycott movements. The dilemma for African American women as streetcar riders in post-Civil War New Orleans demonstrates the everyday struggles and expressions of freedom in the space between postbellum race and gender politics.

Bibliography

- Baggett, Ashley. *Intimate Partner Violence in New Orleans: Gender, Race, and Reform, 1840–1900*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017.
- Bell, Caryn Cossé. *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718–1868*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997.
- Blassingame, John W. *Black New Orleans, 1860–1880*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Clark, Emily. *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Cox, LaWanda. *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981.
- Cudahy, Brian J. *Cash, Tokens, and Transfers: A History of Urban Mass Transit in North America*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1990.
- Dethloff, Henry C., and Robert R. Jones. "Race Relations in Louisiana, 1877–98." *Louisiana*

74. Mizell-Nelson, "Challenging and Reinforcing White Control of Public Space," 125–31.

- History* 9, no. 4 (Autumn 1968): 301–23.
- Domínguez, Virginia R. *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986.
- Fischer, Roger A. “A Pioneer Protest: The New Orleans Street-Car Controversy of 1867.” *Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 3 (July 1968): 219–33.
- Fischer, Roger A. *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana, 1862–77*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974.
- Giesberg, Judith Ann. *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Harlan, Louis R. “Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools during Reconstruction.” *American Historical Review* 67, no. 3 (April 1962): 663–75.
- Hennick, Louis C., and E. Harper Charlton. *The Streetcars of New Orleans*. Gretna: Jackson Square Press, 2005.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hirsch, Arnold R., and Joseph Logsdon, eds. *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.
- Hollandsworth, James G. *An Absolute Massacre: The New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001.
- Hunter, Tera W. *To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Illingworth, James W. “Crescent City Radicals: Black Working People and the Civil War Era in New Orleans.” PhD diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 2015.
- Kelley, Blair L. M. *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. “‘We Are Not What We Seem’: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South.” *Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (June 1993): 75–112.
- Long, Alecia P. *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865–1920*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004.
- McPherson, James M. *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. First edition published 1964 (Princeton University Press).
- Medley, Keith Weldon. *We as Freemen: Plessy v. Ferguson*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003.
- Meier, August, and Elliott Rudwick. “The Boycott Movement against Jim Crow Streetcars in the South, 1900–1906.” *Journal of American History* 55, no. 4 (March 1969): 756–75.
- Meier, August, and Elliott Rudwick. “Negro Boycotts of Jim Crow Streetcars in Tennessee.” *American Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 755–63.
- Meier, August, and Elliott Rudwick. “Negro Boycotts of Segregated Streetcars in Virginia, 1904–1907.” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 81, no. 4 (October 1973): 479–87.
- Mizell-Nelson, Michael. “Challenging and Reinforcing White Control of Public Space: Race Relations on New Orleans Streetcars, 1861–1965.” PhD diss., Tulane University, 2001.
- Norris, Marjorie M. “An Early Instance of Nonviolence: The Louisville Demonstrations of 1870–1871.” *Journal of Southern History* 32, no. 4 (November 1966): 487–504.

- Nystrom, Justin A. *New Orleans after the Civil War: Race, Politics, and a New Birth of Freedom*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Rabinowitz, Howard N. "From Exclusion to Segregation: Southern Race Relations, 1865–1890." *Journal of American History* 63, no. 2 (September 1976): 325–50.
- Rabinowitz, Howard N. *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996. First edition published 1978 (Oxford University Press).
- Rankin, David C. "The Origins of Black Leadership in New Orleans during Reconstruction." *Journal of Southern History* 40, no. 3 (August 1974): 417–40.
- Ryan, Mary P. *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Smith, Elizabeth Parish. "Southern Sirens: Disorderly Women and the Fight for Public Order in Reconstruction-Era New Orleans." PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013.
- Somers, Dale A. "Black and White in New Orleans: A Study in Urban Race Relations, 1865–1900." *Journal of Southern History* 40, no. 1 (February 1974): 19–42.
- Thompson, Shirley Elizabeth. *Exiles at Home: The Struggle to Become American in Creole New Orleans*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Tregle, Joseph G., Jr. "Early New Orleans Society: A Reappraisal." *Journal of Southern History* 18, no. 1 (February 1952): 20–36.
- Tunnell, Ted. *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana, 1862–1877*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984.
- Vincent, Charles. *Black Legislators in Louisiana during Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976.
- Welke, Barbara Young. *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution, 1865–1920*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. First edition published 1955 (Oxford University Press).
- Zylstra, Geoff D. "Whiteness, Freedom, and Technology: The Racial Struggle over Philadelphia's Streetcars, 1859–1867." *Technology and Culture* 52, no. 4 (October 2011): 678–702.