

FORCED LABOR IN THE 19TH CENTURY SOUTH

THE STORY OF PARCHMAN FARM

In 1996, three books were published about forced labor and convict leasing in the American South. It was a noteworthy occurrence, given the scarce interest in the subject in previous years. Historians from C. Vann Woodward to Pete Daniel to Edward Ayers have written perceptively about forced in labor, noting its impact—and brutality—in general terms. Standard texts on Southern history refer to the subject in a paragraph or two in their post-Reconstruction chapters, often noting its demise sentimentally, as the work of devoted humanitarians like Rebecca Latimer and George Washington Cable. Much has been written about Southern honor and violence, about what went on in Southern courtrooms and what went into the making of Southern law. Much less is known about the incarceration of Southern convicts—who they were, what they endured, and how their lives and their labor connect to broader issues of economic development, punishment for profit, and racial control.

Each of these three books brought a different perspective to the subject. Matthew Mancini's One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, covered the most ground—literally. His work is about convict leasing in the entire region, with a chapter devoted to every Southern state save Virginia, where the practice never took hold. On one level, Mancini sees convict leasing in universal terms, offering a backward, race-based, labor-hungry region the tools with which to modernize its economy while also keeping its “criminal” black population in line. On closer inspection, however, he

shows convict leasing to be more of a grab-bag of individual practices, distinctively Southern, yet tailored to specific needs of economic elites in the individual states. What began for similar reasons— a shortage of penitentiaries, a fear of exploding “black crime” following emancipation, a need for pliable bodies to do the dirtiest work with the least resistance, a belief that African-Americans could not be made to labor without coercion— was always a scattered system, effective and profitable in some places, less so in others.

In theory, at least, the benefits of convict labor to a private employer were obvious enough. Despised, powerless, and expendable, a prisoner could be made to do any job, at any pace, in any location. Why? “Because he is a convict,” a Southern railroad official explained, “and if he dies it is a small loss, and we can make him work there, while we cannot get free men to the same kind of labor for, say, six times as much as the convict costs.”¹

Their lives were always in peril. A year or two on the Western North Carolina Railroad was akin to a death sentence: convicts were regularly blown to bits in tunnel explosions, buried in mountain landslides, and swept away in springtime floods. At a prison camp of the Greenwood and August Railroad, convicts were used up faster than South Carolina authorities could supply them. Between 1877 and 1879, the G&A “lost” 128 of their 285 prisoners to gunshots, accidents, and disease (a death rate of 45 percent) and another thirty-nine to escapes. Indeed, one has only to look as far as the quote in Mancini’s book title, which comes from a Southern employer explaining the benefits of convict leasing to George Washington Cable in 1883. “Before the war we owned the Negroes,” he said. “If a man had a good nigger, he could afford to take care of him; if he

was sick get a doctor. He might even put gold plugs in his teeth. But these convicts: we don't own `em. One dies, get another.”²

Convict labor was widely viewed as cheaper and more reliable to than free labor. A study of the convict lease in Texas asserts that the state's sugar industry would have been hard pressed to survive without it. In Alabama, the chief engineer of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company told industrialist Henry Clay Frick that convicts, who comprised about one-quarter of the work force, “mined the cheapest coal ever produced by the Company.” He wasn't merely boasting. “It is an indisputable fact,” said a mining superintendent in Birmingham, that “coal cannot be produced by free labor within 20 cents per ton of what it can be produced by convicts.” (It is no coincidence, notes Mancini, that Alabama was the last state to abolish convict leasing, in 1928). In Florida, private employers were always hard pressed to find workers willing to do “turpentine labor”—a dangerous, physically exhausting job. Convicts filled the void. A local journalist described the “recruitment process” in his area. “Together,” he wrote, “the [county sheriff] and the [turpentine operators] made up a list of some 80 Negroes known to both as good husky fellows, capable of a fair day's work.” Promised five dollars for each one he landed, the sheriff got them all “on various petty charges—gambling, disorderly conduct, assault, and the like.” Most were gathered “with a dragnet at Saturday-night shindies, and hailed to the local justice, who was in [on] the game.”³

Convict labor had other benefits as well. In Alabama and Tennessee, free miners worked in constant fear of being replaced. They understood the perils of joining a union or going out on strike; they knew that if they walked off their jobs to protest low pay or poor working conditions, they might lose their jobs for good. Convict labor served to in-

timidate free labor, undermine worker solidarity, and act as a serious drag on wages. It reached the point, Mancini explains, where state authorities in Alabama felt secure enough to lease convicts to coal companies at rates roughly comparable to the pay scale of free miners.

Why, then, did a system this profitable not last longer than it did? For Mancini, the traditional answer—growing moral outrage on the part of reformers, church groups, and assorted humanitarians-- badly misses the point. Convict labor had always come with built-in problems for employers, he explains. In an extreme case, free miners in eastern Tennessee rose up in armed revolt against convict leasing, triggering one of the largest working-class resurrections in American labor history, and speeding the system's demise. Over time, moreover, employers grew to see convict labor as less productive than they had originally thought-- that the prisoners they leased, mostly first-time offenders, were unskilled, undisciplined, and thoroughly uninterested in their tasks. To compound the problem, state governments increasingly required these employers to sign fixed contracts, meaning that the convicts could no longer be returned to the state when economic times were slow. While well aware of the secondary roles played by reformist rhetoric and political squabbling, Mancini sees convict leasing as a system of declining profitability to employers, and eventually to the states themselves.

Alex Lichtenstein's focus is more on economic modernization than on human cost. His provocative book, Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South, examines the growth, the maturation, and the impact of this system in Georgia (with occasional forays into neighboring states). To Lichtenstein's thinking, convict leasing can no longer be viewed as a minor event in Southern economic

history, or—worse-- a peripheral marker on the long trail of injustice perpetrated against Southern blacks. The system, as it played out in Georgia, did not pit reactionary planters against a modernizing elite. On the contrary, he notes, it incorporated both sides in a process based largely on the expansion of transportation--railroads and paved roads—that benefited big planters and new industrialists while also strengthening the bonds of white supremacy. In Georgia, convict leasing had strong support from a number of important progressives; so, too, and for similar reasons, did prominent state officials and business leaders endorse the chain gang system that so seamlessly replaced the lease in 1909. As Lichtenstein argues—I think persuasively— convict labor played a central role in driving the economic development of the post-emancipation South.

My own book, 'Worse Than Slavery': Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice, is I'm certain, the most traditional of these three accounts, with the simplest story to trace. Parchman is the state penitentiary of Mississippi, a sprawling 20,000-acre plantation in the rich cotton land of the Yazoo Delta. Its legend I note, has come from many sources: "the work chants and field hollers of the black prisoners who toiled there, the Delta blues of ex-convicts like Eddie "Son" House and Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter; the novels of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Shelby Foote, and, most recently, John Grisham, who seem almost mesmerized by the mystique of the huge Delta Farm. One of Faulkner's characters in The Mansion a young attorney, tells his luckless client: "It's Parchman ... destination doom... You can't escape. You can't make it.' And Washington 'Bukka' White, who served hard time there, sings these words in his 'Parchman Farm Blues': 'Oh listen men, I didn't mean no harm. If you want to do good ... stay off the Parchman Farm.'"4

Parchman, I believe, is the closest thing to slavery to survive the Civil War. Its story covers the bleak panorama of race and punishment, brutality and paternalism, in the darkest corner of the American South. In telling it, I relied, first, on the standard accounts of life in the Delta: the memoirs of men and women like William Alexander Percy, David Cohn, Mary Hamilton, and Hodding Carter; the extraordinary sociological studies by Charles Johnson, John Dollard, and Hortense Powdermaker; the ballooning scholarly literature regarding the distinctiveness of this region— what historian James Cobb has called “the most Southern place on Earth.” But my main body of research came from the Penitentiary Books that described the prisoners as they arrived to be processed, the plantation ledgers of the men who leased them, the reports of the state inspectors and doctors who occasionally visited their quarters and, above all, the pardon files of every convict who applied for early release from state custody for a period of almost a hundred years.

The pardon files were the mother lode. In Mississippi, a convict wanting early release had to put a petition in his local newspaper, alerting the community of his intentions. Since most convicts were illiterate, their families would hire a white attorney to compose the petition and get it published. Thus alerted, the community would respond by writing letters of support or opposition to the governor, who would make the final decision. The letters poured in from plantation owners, merchants, ministers, police chiefs, district attorneys, friends, family members, and, of course, the victim (or victims) of the crime. Each pardon file amounted to a social history of the convict, telling of his background, his work habits, his ties to the locality, his standing among the whites in town with influence and the blacks who knew him best.

These tools allowed me to put people at the center of Mississippi's appalling penal history. There was no reason to consider convict labor in terms of modernization or industrial progress, because such trends were virtually non-existent. No part of America was more feudalistic, more frozen in time. With the exception of a short and almost insanely violent period of Reconstruction, Mississippi was ruled by the same planter elite which had led the state into Civil War. They were the men who wrote the infamous Black Codes that other Southern legislatures would copy, almost word for word. They were the men who thought up the convict lease as a substitute for spending the money needed to rebuild Mississippi's lone penitentiary, destroyed by General Sherman's troops during the Civil War, or to fix its crumbling county jails. They were the men who passed the South's first convict leasing law as a means of bolstering the repressive plantation economy, and then took on the task of criminalizing the newly freed black majority by enacting the so-called Pig Laws that redefined "grand larceny" to include the theft of a farm animal or any property valued at ten dollars or more.

Arrests shot up dramatically. The number of state convicts rose from 272 in 1874, the year the Pig Law was passed, to 1,072 by 1877. All were leased to a single bidder, who then sub-leased them to plantations in the Delta. Before Emancipation, the handful of Mississippians arrested and incarcerated had been poor white men who lacked the good sense to settle their differences in private. Slaves had been punished by their masters. Those days were now over. Every single leased convict in Mississippi in the late 19th Century would be a former slave or the descendant of one. A local editor put it crudely but well: "When detected in his frequent delinquencies, Sambo will have no `mausa' to step in between him and danger."⁵

The new breed of convicts included the likes of Rause Echols, “colored of Lauderdale County, who was handed a three-year sentence for stealing an “old suit of clothes.” And Lewis Luckett of Canton, Mississippi, “a pure and simple Negro, black as the ace of spades, who received a two-year sentence for the theft of a hog. And Robert Hamber, “colored of Chickasaw County who got five years for stealing a horse. And Will Evans, a “flat-nosed Negro” from Washington County, whose “vital facts,” were these:

Height: 4 feet, 5 inches
Occupation: Errand Boy
Term: 2 years
Weight: 70 pounds
Crime: Grand Larceny
Habits of Life: Good
Use of Tobacco: Yes
Education: Very Little
Build: Child
Style of Whiskers Worn When Received: None

Will Evans was convicted, and then leased to a plantation, for stealing some change from a dry goods store. He was eight years old, and his case was hardly unique. More than one-quarter of Mississippi’s leased convicts were below the age of nineteen.⁶

The system amounted to state-run slavery, with Mississippi acting as the catcher and the trader, and with a single lessee, chosen by the legislature, paying the state \$1.10 per-convict-per-month for the entire state prison population, and then sub-leasing the prisoners to plantation owners and others for about \$9 per month. Employers preferred convicts over Asians (“too fragile), Irish (“too belligerent), and local Blacks (“too slow.”) In requesting convict “darkies” and “niggers,” the planters seemed to forget that eman-

plantation had occurred. “The crop [here] is being considerably damaged by want of sufficient labor,” said one. “I hope you will send additional convicts without a moment’s delay.” “When you get a moment,” said another, “won’t you send a slave out to fix my cemetery fence?”⁷

The Mississippi plantation leasing records from this era tell a story of relentless brutality and neglect. The convicts ate and slept on bare ground. They were punished for “slow hoeing” (ten lashes), “sorry planting” (five lashes), and “being light with cotton” (five lashes). Many dropped from exhaustion, malaria, pneumonia, sunstroke, dysentery, gunshot wounds, and “shackle poisoning” (the constant rubbing of chains and leg irons against bare flesh). A doctor sent by the state on a rare visit to a Delta plantation wrote that the word “unsanitary” did not begin “to express the filthy conditions of the convict cage”: bloodstained dirt floors, overflowing waste buckets, and vermin-covered walls. In the 1880s, the annual mortality rate for Mississippi’s leased convicts ranged from 9 to 16 percent. Not a single one lived long enough to serve out a sentence of ten or more years.⁸

Some, in fact, described the convict lease in Mississippi as “worse than slavery.” The reason, quite simply, was that antebellum slaves represented a major capital investment for the planter. Economic reality, and varying degrees of paternalism, insured that the antebellum slave would be fed clothed and cared for; the new system absolved everyone from these responsibilities when it came to the treatment—and physical survival—of leased convicts. On the contrary, it encouraged employers to spend as little as possible. “One dies, get another.”

Convict leasing ended in Mississippi in 1890, when a new state constitution was written, spurred by the desire to fully disfranchise Black voters, who were held responsible for instituting the fraud and violence that had marred previous elections. A newspaper headline caught the flavor well: “White Supremacy—The One Idea of the Convention.” For many delegates, however, the issue was not simply white supremacy, but rather which whites should be supreme. The once solid Democratic Party was in crisis. Smaller farmers, feeling squeezed and cheated, were demanding a host of new reforms, from debt relief to railroad regulation to the abolition of convict leasing. To their thinking, the forced labor of black prisoners had provided an unfair advantage to the state’s large planters and businessmen—the people who deserved and needed it least. The reformers won some battles and lost others. But convict leasing was abolished, as of 1894, and money was set aside to establish a state prison in the next several years.⁹

Parchman Farm was seen as a major penal reform, and in some ways it was. The brainchild of Mississippi Governor James E. Vardaman, it certainly improved upon the unspeakable conditions of the convict lease. Known as the White Chief, Vardaman stood out among the racist demagogues of that era—or any era—for his inflammatory rhetoric, his open support of lynching, and his promises to protect white people from the “brutish biological failings” of the “colored race.” Freedom had been a disaster for the Negro, Vardaman believed. It had failed to make him more responsible or to teach him self-restraint. “He is a barbarian still,” the White Chief asserted, with a “thin veneering of civilization” and an “increased capacity for crime.”¹⁰

Vardaman saw Parchman Farm as a way to re-socialize the state’s African-American population. He was particularly concerned about young black men, who had never

experienced the “civilizing influences” of slavery. For Vardaman and his supporters, Parchman would recreate the plantation experience, providing discipline to the convicts and profits to the state. The Farm’s 20,000 acres, deep in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta were divided into fifteen field camps, positioned at least half a mile apart. There were no walls or fences. The illusion of escape was everywhere, but the reality was something else again— marksmen on horseback, packs of well-trained bloodhounds, mile upon mile of open vista, instant access to posses filled with local police and willing volunteers.

The Parchman superintendent served as the plantation master. He lived in a Victorian mansion, attended by a small army of “house convicts.” State law required that he be “an experienced farmer,” able to keep Parchman self-sufficient while bringing in a good cotton crop. “His annual report to the legislature is not of salvaged lives,” a newspaper remarked. “It is of profit and loss statements, with the accent on the profit.”

The camps were segregated by race and sex (although black men constituted well more than 90 percent of the prison population). Each was directed by a sergeant, or overseer, who lived on the grounds. It was his responsibility to fix the work schedules, mete out the discipline, and inspect the crops. Below him were two assistant sergeants, or “drivers,” known as “cap’n” to the men. One driver worked the convicts in the fields; the other ran the barracks where they lived.

Under the drivers were convicts known as “trusty shooters,” who watched over the regular prisoners (known as gunmen, because they toiled under the guns of the trustees). Most “trusty shooters” were serving long sentences, usually for murder. Chosen for their ability to intimidate and to follow orders without question, they received special favors—and one remarkable incentive. By tradition, a “trusty-shooter” who shot or captured a

fleeing convict was given a pardon, no questions asked. A look at the prison's "discharge books" shows case after case of one convict winning his freedom at the expense of another convict's life. Trusty-shooter Robert Garrison was released "for meritorious service as guard, killing Silas Todd." George Pat was pardoned "for shooting and killing George Thomas trying to escape, both balls entering his head." As the Parchman superintendent wrote Governor Theo Bilbo in 1929:

A [Negro] in the plow gang #8 broke and ran for freedom today and was shot from a considerable distance by [trusty shooter] Andrew Coleman, #1104. This shot Negro made the statement before being put to sleep on the operating table, that he was running to escape and that he intended to get away...

I feel it that it is necessary to release this guard immediately to keep up the wonderful morale that now exists all over the institution among our guards."

Bilbo knew what was at stake. The trusty-shooter got his pardon.¹¹

The convict's day began at 4:30. Following a breakfast of biscuits, syrup and coffee, he was marched to the fields. At the margins stood the trusty-shooters who formed a floating barrier between the convict and the free world. Each man belonged to a work gang with a quota to fill. In the fall that meant picking 200 pounds of cotton as part of the "long line." The pace was set by a caller, chosen from the ranks, with the men working to his chanting tempo. The callers all had nicknames: "Fat Head" and "Bootmouth," "Red Worm" (he killed a man over fish-bait), "Burndown" (an arsonist), and "22" (serving twenty-two years.). Many of their verses were preserved by folklorist John Lomax, who recorded them on visits to Parchman in the 1930s. I borrow liberally

from the Lomax recordings in my book, as the callers sing about day-to-day life at Parchman, and the world they left behind. Some verses draw knowing laughter:

“Oh wasn’t I lucky when I got my time,
Babe, I didn’t git a hundred, got a ninety-nine.”

Or shouts of approval:

“Take this hammer
Take it to the sergeant
Tell him I’m gone.”

Or sullen groans:

“I’m choppin in the bottom wid a hundred years,
Tree fall on me, I don’t bit no care.”

Or pleas to make the sun go down:

“Been a great long time since Hannah went down
Oh, Hannah, go down;
Been a great long time since Hannah go down
Oh, Hannah go down!”

Or endless renditions about “Rosie,” the queen of Parchman Farm:

“Big-Leg Rosie, with her big-leg drawers
Got me wearen these striped overalls.”¹²

The fabled symbol of authority and discipline at Parchman was the thick leather strap known as “Black Annie,” which hung from the driver’s belt. Whipping had a long history in the South, and strong racial overtones going back to slavery. By 1900, corporal punishment for convicts had been outlawed in all Northern states except Delaware. In Mississippi, as in other parts of the South, the whipping of convicts had strong public appeal. “The whip makes no appeal to hidden virtue,” said the Jackson Clarion Ledger,

“but it is a sure and effective means of planting fear ... in the hearts of [criminals]. It is a retribution, and retribution hurts.”¹³

For Parchman officials, whipping needed no fancy defense. It was, they believed, the perfect punishment for the wayward children of former slaves. The ideal whipping sent a message to the convict without interfering with his ability to do his job. “You spank a fellow right,” claimed one superintendent, “and he’ll be able to work on.” The average was ten powerful strokes to the naked buttocks or lower back. Often, a caller chanted the cadence:

“One ... he’s a gotten de leather,
Two ... he don’t know no better,
Three ... cry niggah, stick yo’ finger in yo’ eye,
Four... niggah thought he had a knife,
Five, ... got hit off’n his visitin’ wife,
Six ... now he’ll git time for life,
Seven ... lay in on trusty man!
Eight ... what! Wham! He gotta wu’k tomorra,
Nine ... he gotta chop cotton in de sun,
Ten ... dat’s all, trusty men, you’s done.”¹⁴

Parchman changed little over time, reflecting both the static culture of Mississippi and the success it appeared to achieve. Well into the 20th Century, it remained what it had always been, what Governor Vardaman had intended it to be— a giant prison farm with slaves. Blacks streamed through the front gate as illiterate field hands and left the same way. That was their lot in life. Anything more was anathema in a culture where white supremacy and unskilled Black labor went hand in hand.

What Parchman did do, consistently, was to make large profits for the nation’s poorest state— putting millions of dollars into the revenue stream while staying perfectly self-sufficient. Until the 1960s, it remained a stable and successful business, dependent on

the fortunes of King Cotton, but better able than neighboring operations to deal with its economic ups and downs. As a labor-intensive plantation, Parchman depended far less on the tractors and cotton-picking machines that revolutionized Southern agriculture—and spurred the black migration north. Parchman’s crop was prized for being hand-picked, which made for a cleaner product. Equally important, a prison official noted, “a cotton-picking inmate is less likely to promote mischief than one who stands around watching a machine do his job.”¹⁵

What changed Parchman, in the end, was the civil rights struggle that engulfed Mississippi in the 1960s. Originally, segregationist leaders like Senator James O. Eastland and Governor Ross Barnett had expected to use Parchman as a weapon against the “Northern agitators” who first arrived during the Freedom Rides and vowed to return in larger numbers for Freedom Summer, 1964. One Jackson newspaper boasted of Parchman’s Southern charm:

ATTENTION RESTLESS RACE-MIXERS

Whose Hobby is Creating Trouble

FULFILL THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME

HAVE A VACATION ON A REAL PLANTATION

Buy yourself a Southbound ticket Check in and Sign the guest register at the Jackson City jail. Pay a nominal fine of \$200. Then spend the next four months at our 21,000-acre Parchman Plantation in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. Meals furnished. Enjoy the wonders of chopping cotton, warm sunshine, plowing mules and tractors, feeding the chickens, slopping the hogs, scrubbing floors, cooking and washing dishes, laundering clothes.

Sun lotion, un-ion plasters, as well as medical

service free. Experience the `abundant' life under total socialism. Parchman prison is fully air-cooled by Mother Nature.

(We cash U.S. Government Welfare Checks)¹⁶

In fact, the reverse occurred. The civil rights workers sent to Parchman were hailed as national heroes, survivors of the “toughest” prison in the nation’s most repressive state. For the first time, the press beyond Mississippi got a good glimpse of a penal farm that was part of Southern legend, yet carefully hidden from public view. Shortly thereafter, several Parchman convicts, aided by Northern civil rights lawyers, filed a federal lawsuit (Gates v. Collier) alleging that “deplorable conditions and practices” at Parchman had deprived them of rights guaranteed under the First, Eighth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth amendments to the U. S. Constitution. The federal judge who heard the case, a white Mississippian, went up to have a look for himself. What he saw— kitchens overrun with rodents, open ditches filled with sewage and medical waste, polluted water supplies, reports of trustees brutalizing inmates who, in turn, brutalized each other— led him to qualify the lawsuit as a class action under federal guidelines, covering all inmates at the prison. The judge issued a series of injunctions, ordering an end to dawn-to-dusk field work, the abolition of corporal punishment, the dismantling of the trusty-shooter system, the appointment of a professional penologist to run the facility, and the hiring of professional guards. “Defendants shall exert every effort to obtain competent civilian personnel,” he declared, “making special appeals to the black community for qualified persons.”¹⁷

Parchman today is a different place—a huge, all-male facility with black inmates still comprising the vast majority of the inmate population. Its dusty fields do not grow much

cotton anymore, and few inmates work the fields. There's a modern hospital, a handsome Spiritual Life Center, a fully equipped gymnasium, and a sizeable law library, perhaps the most popular spot of all. The men spend much of the day killing time; gang violence is a serious problem here, as it is in prisons throughout the land. "These are not submissive inmates," a Parchman official told me recently. "Those days are long gone. A lot of the people we get have no roots. They have no discipline. They are very angry. They resent us more than they fear us, and they need more help than a prison can provide."¹⁸

Almost a decade ago, on a trip to Parchman, I spoke to a group of old-timers, asking about the changes they had seen. These men were veterans of hand-picked cotton and long labor in the fields. They can recall the beatings and the shootings by the trusties, and the sound of Black Annie on fully exposed flesh. One of them was a plaintiff in the Gates case, and all are grateful for the good it did. Yet these men surprised me by insisting that the new Parchman can learn something from the old. What was missing today, said Horace Carter, a prisoner for almost fifty years, was "the feeling that work counted for something," that the farm had a rhythm, "awful bad as it was in most camps, that kept us tired and kept us together and made me feel better inside."

"I'm not looking backwards," he went on. "I know the troubles at old Parchman better than any man alive. I'm seventy-three years old. But I look around today and see a place that makes me sad."¹⁹

FOOTNOTES

1. Frenise Logan, The Negro in North Carolina, 1876-1894, 1964, pp. 191-193
2. Hilda J. Zimmermann, "Penal Systems and Penal Reforms in the South Since The Civil War," Ph. D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1947, p. 129; Alfred Oliphant, Evolution of the Penal System of South Carolina, 1916, pp. 5-9; George Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900, 1952, pp. 267-71.
3. Donald Walker, Penology for Profit: A History of the Texas Prison System, 1867-1912, 1988, pp. 57-61; Carl Harris, Political Power in Birmingham, 1977, pp. 1-24, 203; Richard Barry, "Slavery in the South Today," Cosmopolitan, March, 1907, p. 488.
4. David M. Oshinsky, Worse Than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice, 1996, p. 1-2
5. Ibid., pp. 40-41; William Sallis, "The Color Line in Mississippi Politics, 1865-1915," Ph. D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1967, chapters 1 and 2.
6. For all three men, see, Pardon Files, Governors Papers, RG 27, vols. 42, 142, 144; For Will Evans, see, "Original Description Book of the Miss. State Penitentiary; Both in Mississippi Department of History and Archives.
7. Charles Scott to Warden M. L. Jenkins, May 4, 1896; J. H. O'Donnell to Jenkins, March 4, 1896, both in RG 49, no. 3, file 1896, MDAH.
8. R. D. Farish to Board of Control, May 23, 1896, RG 27, no. 228; E. J. Turner to Sec. of St. Bd. of Health, October 12, 1896, RG 49, in ibid.
9. Oshinsky, Worse Than Slavery, p. 51-53.
10. Ibid., pp. 85-106.
11. Board of Prison Trustees Minute Book, 1906-1916, pp. 305, 312; RG 49, vol. 31;

- J.W. Williamson to Governor Theo Bilbo, July 26, 1929, Andrew Coleman Pardon File, RG 27, no 578, both in MDAH.
12. Oshinsky, 'Worse Than Slavery,' pp. 145-147.
 13. Jackson Clarion-Ledger, July 20, 1935.
 14. Oshinsky, 'Worse Than Slavery', (front matter).
 15. Jackson Clarion-Ledger, October 28, 1965.
 16. Jackson Daily News, June 24, 1961.
 17. Oshinsky, 'Worse than Slavery', p. 247
 18. Interview with Eugene Meally.
 19. Interviews with Parchman inmates Horace Carter, Delbert Driskill, James Louis, Robert Phillips, and Matthew Winter.