

Black Struggle, White Resistance and Upper Texas Gulf Coast Railroads, 1900-1945

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Black railroad workers along the Upper Texas Gulf Coast (UTGC) played an important role in the struggle for workplace equity between 1900 and 1945.¹ The constraints of Jim Crow permeated the region's industry and made the road to equality an especially hard one.² The response of black railroad workers and those connected to their plight to issues of workplace discrimination tells much about the meaning of their voices and their stories to the history of the African-American labor community.

The practice of denying African Americans equal job opportunities in UTGC railroads reflected a national trend of employment discrimination by all railroads.³ Blacks normally did not find employment in skilled occupations. Unions and employers usually assigned them to low-grade jobs. Their highest upgrading opportunities were generally limited to the lowest classification for white workers. For nearly half a century, black railroad workers along the UTGC tenaciously fought to overcome workplace inequities.⁴

The rapid industrial growth on the UTGC brought on by the discovery of oil at Spindletop, Texas, in 1901, catapulted the UTGC into national economic prominence, brought new industries, spawned urban migration, and tested the boundaries of Jim Crow in the workplace. For many years white workers and employers acted upon the assumptions of white supremacy and relegated black workers to second-class status. Early twentieth century UTGC industries provided a context that demonstrated intense race struggle as whites attempted to maintain control of the job market, and blacks struggled to improve racial inequities.⁵

The four big railroad unions in the region – The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen – followed this trend and deferred to the wishes of white workers. Until the mid-

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1920s, one of the few railroad organizations available to black Texans was the Association of Colored Railway Trainmen and Locomotive Firemen Incorporated (ACT). Founded in 1912 in Knoxville, Tennessee, the association reached a national membership of around 3,500 in 1926. The ACT was not recognized as a bona fide railroad union local and its members were denied voting privileges by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Trainmen and Firemen. The ACT did, however, negotiate contractual agreements for its members. White unions usually honored these contracts providing that they did not conflict with Jim Crow customs. Most agreements for African Americans relegated them to low-grade job classifications. Black trainmen, for example, were designated as car riders while whites doing the same work received better job titles and higher wages.⁶

From its Texas Gulf Coast headquarters in Kingsville, the ACT filtered out policy to its affiliates throughout the state. It operated as an auxiliary to the larger and all-white Brotherhood of Locomotive Trainmen. Although it appeared to be a union local, the Gulf Coast ACT exercised limited authority. The auxiliary merely provided an opportunity for black trainmen to meet and discuss work issues. Although its members paid dues to the nearest white union local, they did not enjoy the same benefits as white workers in the Brotherhood of Trainmen. Blacks were contractually forced to concede seniority rights to white workers. Moreover, the occupational status of most blacks usually depended on the hiring practices of the Brotherhood local. Thus, the negotiated contracts between the ACT, the Brotherhood of Trainmen, and employers largely reflected the desires of whites to control the progress of blacks in the industry.⁷

The ACT struggled to change discriminatory practices within UTGC railroads. They held annual conventions to discuss workplace issues. The ACT stressed black solidarity and racial advancement. During the 1930s its members fought to organize their auxiliaries into a bona fide union. More importantly, they struggled to protect their rights as working people. Together, members of the ACT complained about their auxiliary status and denounced the practice of white

men being hired today having any bumping rights over a senior man.

We don't believe in a man hiring this week and be allowed to exercise his seniority – now and never. We don't believe in vice versing seniority. A man knows full well that when he hires on the R. R. [sic] in this capacity that he do not hire on a regular job... You too will be in a position to be displaced by the youngest man on the seniority list.⁸

Led by its president, Jordan J. Jefferson, the ACT petitioned the national Railroad Adjustment Board to address their concerns about seniority and unionization. Despite approval to form a separate black trainmen union, racial

discrimination persisted. Whites in the industry stubbornly rejected racial equality and continued to deny black workers fair access to jobs.⁹

Despite white resistance, African Americans continued their struggle to improve working conditions for blacks in the industry. During the 1930s, C. W. Rice, a prominent newspaper publisher from Houston, for instance, complained about the discriminatory practices of UTGC railroads, and he discouraged blacks from joining the American Federation of Labor (AFL)-controlled Brotherhood of Railroad Carmen.¹⁰ Rice embarked upon several strategies to combat workplace inequities. First, he attempted to organize black railroad car men (coach cleaners) on the UTGC. Rice encouraged black car men to "demand that organizers present a copy of the bylaws and constitution" of unions so that African Americans "may read and understand that no Negro can become a bona fide member" of railroad unions.¹¹

Rice viewed the AFL's racial policies toward black car men as unconstitutional because it allowed labor organizations to make contracts for people who did not belong to the organization. He also complained that the AFL allowed election irregularities to persist. Rice charged that election mediators compromised their authority in a 1938 union election for the bargaining rights of black car men. According to Rice, election monitors suggested that it was best for Negro workers to "go along with white organizations until they could learn more about the technique of the organized labor movement."

The perception of black workers as incapable unionists encouraged Rice to further his efforts to obtain racial equality.¹² Although Rice convinced a district federal judge to grant a temporary restraining order against the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, he failed to organize black car men into their own union. Black workers at various rail shops in the UTGC rejected Rice's efforts to undermine the labor movement and opted to maintain their auxiliary status with the AFL. Rice failed to see how blacks

in the face of the past policies and discriminatory practices by certain white labor unions, that some of our leaders will urge workers to join these unions. When Negroes take out memberships in these unions, there are like a label on a bottle.¹³

Rice blamed the lack of organization among black railroad workers and the incompetence of African-American union leaders as a cause for many problems that black workers experienced. Some black workers reluctantly supported Rice. Many, however, remained uncertain about their loyalties to him and the labor movement.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Rice moved forward with his plan to eliminate the AFL as the bargaining agent for UTGC black car men. He turned his attention to policymakers in Washington, D.C., and appealed to the national government about

conditions in the railroad industry. Rice believed that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had the power to legislate and enforce labor policy that could help eliminate racial discrimination. In July 1939, Rice testified before the House Labor Committee. He challenged the Wagner Act and presented affidavits of black railroad workers alleging pervasive discrimination. His unsuccessful attempt to have Congress amend the Wagner Act and outlaw unions that practiced racial discrimination brought attention to the critical state of black railroad workers along the Gulf.¹⁵

Rice also challenged national union leadership. He urged William Green, president of the AFL, and John J. Lewis, head of the CIO, to support his proposed amendment. In a letter to Green, Rice suggested that the leader of the AFL endorse the amendment, "since you have repeatedly advised the affiliate unions of the AFL to remove the color bar and admit colored members and these unions have refused."¹⁶

Neither the House Labor Committee, Green, nor Lewis provided much help for Rice.¹⁷ This moved the editor to file a complaint with the National Railway Mediation Board. In doing so, he asked that the AFL be restricted from representing black railroad car men. The Mediation Board's denial of Rice's request for a new election moved him to file a federal lawsuit in 1938 to have the AFL's certification over black car men revoked. That court dismissed the claim. The Appellate Court upheld the board's earlier decision claiming "employees are guaranteed the right to select a common bargaining representative and...to hold that colored employees could be represented only by colored persons...would be to introduce...the very discrimination the federation seeks to avoid."¹⁸ The court's decision delivered a serious setback for Rice as white unions and employers continued to follow the same patterns of racial discrimination despite investigation by the Fair Employment Practice Commission (FEPC).¹⁹

A second wave of industrial growth brought on by World War II led to the formation of the FEPC.²⁰ The circumstances surrounding FEPC intercession into the affairs of businesses and unions differed between regions.²¹ Along the UTGC the FEPC faced a range of reactions to its investigations. In each case the agency confronted unique situations regarding race relations.²² For nearly three years, industries along the UTGC resisted FEPC efforts to provide workplace relief for black workers. Employers and white unionists in the oil, shipbuilding, and steel industries had little problem resisting black advancements. But the region's railroad industry demonstrated some of the toughest opposition to racial equality and to the FEPC. The activism among black railroad workers and those concerned about their plight compelled opponents of equality to further undermine efforts to improve workplace conditions.²³

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company with its Texas-New Orleans (TNO) and Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) subsidiaries, for example, refused to upgrade blacks. Southern Pacific management ignored threats by black workers to expose the company's racial practices.²⁴ The behavior of the Southern Pacific illustrates its lack of regard for black workers. It also demonstrates that the Southern Pacific rejected efforts by the FEPC to remedy racial discrimination.²⁵

FEPC investigations and a subsequent public hearing against the Southern Pacific Railroad gives evidence to the force of white hegemony and Jim Crow culture in the UTGC railroads. Most whites at the company refused to accept the FEPC and viewed the agency as an intrusion into their way of life. They resisted the agency's attempts to eradicate racial discrimination. The tradition of agitation by black railroad workers, however, and of those closely connected with their struggle, provided a potential base from which the FEPC could operate. Aside from the complaints by black railroad workers flowing into the FEPC's regional office, the agency made few attempts to engage the opinions of community activists and black labor agitators. Instead, they confronted railroad employers, white unionists, and those opposed to racial equality with limited help from the African-American labor community.

W. Don Ellinger, who became regional director for the FEPC in 1944, took on opposition to racial inequities at the Southern Pacific. Ellinger replaced Carlos Castaneda, a history professor at the University of Texas at Austin, as chief investigator of discrimination complaints along the Gulf Coast. Castaneda assumed new duties as special assistant to the FEPC director on Latin American Affairs and as director of a new regional office in San Antonio. Ellinger processed most of the FEPC complaints against the Southern Pacific. These cases presented a unique opportunity for Ellinger to fulfill a personal challenge of confronting racial discrimination. He aspired to continue a tradition that he learned from his father. As a cabinet manufacturer in Missouri, the elder Ellinger had employed both black and white workers on an equal basis.²⁶

The younger Ellinger also acquired an activist attitude as a student at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. As an undergraduate he actively engaged in union organizing and worked to improve conditions for working-class people. He believed that the labor movement offered "the best method for social change." Ellinger placed a high priority on racial justice and he struggled to impose these virtues on the Southern Pacific.²⁷

Despite his objection to United States involvement in World War II, Ellinger felt an obligation to serve his country. He did so by arranging the case against whites at the Southern Pacific. He relentlessly pressured A. J. Pickett, General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks in the Texas Gulf Coast,

and T. C. Montgomery, Manager of the Personnel Department for the Southern Pacific Lines, to cooperate with the FEPC. If conditions of racial discrimination "discourage qualified workers from using their full skills," Ellinger warned, "it is our obligation to try to help find a solution which will comply with Executive Order 8802."²⁸ Compliance for the FEPC usually meant a written statement from a company or union that promised to eliminate discriminatory practices. This did not move Pickett or Montgomery to alter their policies on racial hiring.²⁹

Ellinger organized a public hearing against the Southern Pacific in April 1945. This hearing compelled the Southern Pacific and white unionists to pool their financial resources and resist legal attempts by the FEPC to alter workplace racial policies.³⁰ The quality of legal representation of the Southern Pacific and white employees suggests that both intended to resist FEPC intercession at all cost. The Southern Pacific for example, hired John Bullington, a prominent attorney from the Baker and Botts firm of Houston, to represent them against the FEPC. Bullington insisted that the responsibility for the movement of wartime goods rested "solely on the shoulders of railroad executives and nobody else" and was more important to the war effort than the upgrading of black workers.³¹

The forced promotion of non-white workers at the Southern Pacific, in Bullington's opinion, violated union policy, disrupted local customs, and consequently encouraged racial tension that threatened the transportation of war goods. The Southern Pacific recognized that social norms shared some responsibility for discrimination in the railroad industry. They did not hesitate to acknowledge this influence on their operation.³² One of the primary functions of the railroad industry, Bullington insisted, was to encourage "peace and harmony with existing employees" and "obviously...the tying up of a yard can tie up the entire railroad. We have not been motivated by any prejudice against niggers or any desire to discriminate against them."³³

Bullington's racist comment reflected the attitude of the Southern Pacific toward black workers. Bullington also challenged, as did most whites in UTGC railroads, the qualifications of black workers at the Southern Pacific. He pointed out that the FEPC failed to consider that the blacks that filed complaints with the FEPC "were not fully qualified for employment in the jobs for which they applied." He also suggested that the prospects of racial violence disqualified most black workers for certain jobs. "It does not seem to us," Bullington claimed, "to be very helpful to the manpower situation on our railroad to employ six men if, as a result, we lose several hundred existing employees." Bullington's strained argument concerning qualifications indicates the extent to which employers and unions would go to maintain control of the workplace and to justify discrimination.³⁴

Bullington attempted to frighten the FEPC into believing that the enforcement of Executive Order 8802 encouraged racial conflict and work stoppages. He never provided evidence to support his claim.³⁵ This gave Simon Stickgold, the FEPC leading trial examiner, an opportunity to challenge Bullington's assertion. Stickgold argued that "there had been no evidence of work stoppages" resulting from racial strife in the UTGC railroad industry during the war. He viewed Bullington's tactic as another attempt to drum up racial tension. There is a difference, Stickgold contended, between actual hostilities and trying to peer into the future for the purpose of predicting what might be. "As far as my information permits," Stickgold claimed, "there have been no difficulties."³⁶

The cries of racial violence and work stoppages by Bullington and the Southern Pacific simply reflected the resolve of whites to reject racial equality. It turned out to be nothing more than a scare tactic. In fact, the FEPC issued a directive for the Southern Pacific to end its practices of racial discrimination. The directive had little effect as whites at the Southern Pacific continued to discriminate and defy the FEPC. Although it failed to garner compliance, the FEPC closed its case against the Southern Pacific in 1945.³⁷

The inability of the FEPC to successfully end racial discrimination for black workers at the Southern Pacific illustrated the weakness of the agency and the force of white resistance. Although white railroad workers and employers refused to accept racial equality, black railroad workers relentlessly struggled to define their place in the industry.

The evolution of class and race consciousness among black railroad workers along the UTGC is a vital story in the history of the day-to-day struggles of African-American workers. Long before the FEPC began its investigations, African-American railroad workers were defining their place in the industry. Indeed, the story of African Americans in Texas railroads should not lead to generalizations about the experiences of black workers throughout the country. Instead, each region and each industry tells its own story. As for black railroad workers along the UTGC, the voices and strategies that surfaced helped to shape their identity that gave them some measure of legitimacy by the 1940s.

NOTES

¹ The Upper Texas Gulf Coast includes Chambers, Galveston, Harris, and Jefferson counties. For further analysis on the evolution of the African-American labor community, see Merl Reed, *Race, Class and Communities in Southern Labor History* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994). Also, see Michael Honey,

Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia 1915-32* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communist During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); "We Are Not What We Seem: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* 80, (June 1993): 75-112; Eric Arnesen, "The African-American Working Class in the Jim Crow Era," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 41 (Spring 1992): 58-75; "What's on the Black Worker's Mind?: African-American Workers and the Union Tradition," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 10 (1994); "Following the Color Line of Labor: Black Workers and the Labor Movement Before 1930," *Radical History Review* 55 (1993).

² Jim Crow here is defined as the racial discrimination that resulted from a system of laws that segregated blacks and whites. It also sanctioned the social, political, and economic domination of whites over blacks. For example, see James Martin SoRelle, "The Darker Side of Heaven: The Black Community in Houston, Texas, 1917-1945," Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1980. For more on the origins and the nature of Jim Crow, consult C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967); and Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

³ Herbert Northrup, *The Negro and Organized Labor* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), 48-99; William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 38-48; Edwin L. Brown, "...To Make A Man Feel Good": John Henry Mealing, Railroad Caller," *Labor History*, 27 (Spring 1986): 257-264; Jack Santino, "Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: The Negotiation of Black Occupational Identity Through Personal Experience Narrative," *Journal of American Folklore* 96 (October/December 1983): 393-412.

⁴ Robert Bell affidavit, January 19, 1943, RG 228, Entry 70, Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT), FEPC Records, MKT file, National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas (hereafter cited FEPC Records). All FEPC Gulf Coast railroad documents are found in RG 228 and entry 70 unless otherwise noted. James A. Scott to the FEPC, September 5, 1943; April 3, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Lee Roy Cook affidavit to FEPC, May 11, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Don Ellinger to Leonard Brin, May 16, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Don Ellinger to Fred Taylor, April 6, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file.

⁵ For example, see Ernest Obadele-Starks, "The Road to Jericho: Black Workers, the FEPC and the Struggle for Racial Equality on the Upper Texas Gulf Coast, 1941-1947" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1996); Ray Marshall, "Some Reflections on Labor History," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 75 (Fall 1971): 137-185; SoRelle, "The Darker Side of Heaven," 151-154; Joe Feagin, *Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political-Economic Perspective* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 58-59; Joseph A. Pratt, *The Growth of a Refining Region* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980), 37-39; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin, Tex.: Pemberton Press, 1973), 147-149.

⁶ Northrup, *The Negro and Organized Labor*, 48-54; Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 77-94; Harris, William H., *Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-37* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 4.

⁷ Florence Murray, *The Negro Handbook, 1942* (New York: Wendell Malliet and Company, 1942), 138-139; F. E. Wolfe, *Admission to American Trade Unions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1912), 119-120; W. E. B. DuBois, ed., *The Negro Artisan* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Publications, 1902), 167-168; Northrup, *The Negro and Organized Labor*, 73. Not until the formation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) in 1925 did black railroad workers boast a nationally recognized railroad union with full bargaining rights. For example, see Harris, *Keeping the Faith*, 26-65.

⁸ "Resolution" of Colored Trainmen of America, February 13, 1938, Colored Trainmen of America Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library (hereafter cited as ACT Collection).

⁹ 1935 ACT application for representation submitted to the Railroad Adjustment Board, ACT Collection.

¹⁰ *Negro Labor News*, December 23, 1939, 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, November 13, 1939, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, April 9, 1938, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1939, 1.

¹⁵ In 1935, the Supreme Court had declared Section 7a of the National Recovery Act (NRA) unconstitutional. The power to regulate commerce among states, the high court charged, rested with Congress and not the executive branch. Despite a brief setback, renewed support from progressive policymakers in Congress helped pass a measure proposed by Senator Robert Wagner of New York. The new act provided workers with far more federal protection and outlawed many labor practices traditionally used by employers to fight unionization. The National Labor Relations Act also set up the NLRB to handle labor disputes that arose in connection with the NRA. It empowered the NLRB to monitor employers and compelled them to recognize legitimate unions. The NLRB reviewed labor disputes and fined employers who engaged in unfair labor practices such as company-controlled unions, interference with freedom of speech and assembly, firing or discriminating against union members, and refusing to bargain in good faith. Workers could petition the NLRB for government supervised union elections; *Negro Labor News*, June 24, 1939, 1; July 8, 1939, 1; Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 105.

¹⁶ *Negro Labor News*, December 16, 1939, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, July 23, 1939, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 6, 1940, 1; December 23, 1944, 1; Murray, *The Negro Handbook*, 139-140.

¹⁹ Transcribed interview with Moses LeRoy by George Green, August 19, 1971, Texas Labor Archive Oral History Collection, #20, University of Texas at Arlington, 2-5 (hereafter cited TLAOC); *Negro Labor News*, May 13, 1939, 1. Transcribed interview with James Saunders by George W. Green, August 13, 1971, TLAOC #20; *Negro Labor News*, November 25, 1939, 1.

²⁰ In June 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, which prohibited discrimination in defense industries during World War II. The order resulted from the March on Washington Movement of the early 1940s. Led by A. Philip Randolph, thousands of black workers threatened to demonstrate at Washington, D.C., in protest of racial discrimination in American defense industries during World War II. The executive order admonished biased employers, labor unions, and federal agencies that practiced workplace discrimination. It also established the FEPC. This agency investigated complaints of discrimination in the workplace, redressed these grievances, and recommended ways to enforce its orders. Roosevelt also issued Executive Order 9346, which reorganized the agency, improved its budget, and established regional offices. For specific discussions on the origins and development of the FEPC, see Louis C. Kesselman, *The Social Politics of the FEPC: A Study in Reform Pressure Movements* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948); Louis Ruchames, *Race Jobs and Politics: The Story of FEPC* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953); Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March: The Organizational Politics of FEPC* (Glencoe, Ill.: Atheneum Press, 1959); and Merl Reed, *Seedtime for the Civil Rights Movement: The President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

²¹ Over the past few years researchers have attempted to capture the essence and the meaning of the FEPC to black equality in American industries. Recent works on the FEPC provide little in-depth discussion of an evolving grassroots identity among black workers in the industrial South. The reactions to and outcomes of FEPC investigations differed by industry and by region. For discussions on these differences, see Dominic J. Capucci, Jr., "Wartime Fair Employment Practices Committees: The Governor's Committee and the First FEPC in New York City, 1941-43," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 9 (1985): 45-63; Merl E. Reed, "The FEPC, the Black Worker, and the Southern Shipyards," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 74 (Autumn 1974): 446-467; "Pennsylvania's Black Workers, The Defense Industries, and the Federal Agencies, 1941-1945," *Labor History* 27 (1986): 356-384; "FEPC and the Federal Agencies in the South," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (1980): 43-56; William H. Harris, "Federal Intervention in Union Discrimination: FEPC and West Coast Shipyards during World War II," *Labor History* 22 (Summer 1981): 325-347; Robert Bailey, "Theodore G. Bilbo and the Fair Employment Practices Controversy: A Southern Senator's Reaction to a Changing World," *Journal of Mississippi History* 52 (1980): 27-42; Louis C. Kesselman, "The Fair Employment Practice Movement in Perspective," *Journal of Negro History* 31 (1946): 30-46; John Beecher, "8802 Blues," *New Republic* (February 1943): 249.

²² The FEPC conducted investigations in several UTGC industries as early as 1942. This resulted in the discovery of pervasive discrimination against black workers throughout the region. The cases filed against these companies and unions lasted until the Dallas regional office closed in 1945. Obadele-Starks, "The Road to Jericho" surveys the experiences of black workers and the FEPC across five industries. Each episode provides useful insight on FEPC investigations into alleged racial discrimination. For another examination of the FEPC in the Upper Texas Gulf Coast, readers should refer to Emilio Zamora, "The Failed Promises of Wartime Opportunity for Mexicans in the Texas Oil Industry," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95 (Winter 1992): 323-350.

²³ Obadele-Starks, "The Road to Jericho", 43.

²⁴ Bell affidavit, January 19, 1943, FEPC Records, MKT file. Also see the affidavits of Scott to FEPC, September 5, 1943, Cook to FEPC, May 11, 1944, and Ellinger to Taylor, April 6, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file.

²⁵ *Houston Informer*, May 5, 1945, 1; Transcript of FEPC hearing on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad (TNO), FEPC Headquarter Records, Legal Division, Entry 19, Case #82, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited TNO Hearing). For a complete history of the Southern Pacific, see Don L. Hofsommer, *The Southern Pacific, 1901-1985* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986).

²⁶ Ruth Ellinger, telephone interview with author, November 12, 1995; Zamora, "Failed Promises," 332.

²⁷ Ellinger, telephone interview; Zamora, "Failed Promises," 332.

²⁸ Ellinger to A. J. Pickett, April 6, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Ellinger to T. C. Montgomery, April 15, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file.

²⁹ Ellinger to James A. Scott, May 5, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file.

³⁰ Ellinger to Mann, August 5, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Ellinger to Pickett, May 26, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Brin to Maslow, June 5, 1944, FEPC Records, MKT file; Ellinger to Mitchell, March 6, 1945, FEPC Records, MKT file; Johnson to Mitchell, March 23, 1945, FEPC Records, MKT file; Ellinger to Simon Stickgold, April 18, 1945, FEPC Records, MKT file.

³¹ TNO Hearing; Ellinger to Stickgold, April 18, 1945, FEPC Records, MKT file. For an example of Bullington's work, see Kenneth J. Lipartito and Joseph A. Pratt, *Baker & Botts in the Development of Modern Houston* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 142, 173.

³² TNO Hearing.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Notice of Hearing for the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and Texas and New Orleans Railroad, April 17, 1945, FEPC Records, Texas and New Orleans file.