

BRONX SLAVE MARKET

PROFESSOR SUSAN WATSON TURNER

LEHMAN COLLEGE – CUNY

MUSIC MEDIA THEATRE & DANCE



HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVE

- WWII LABOR MARKET IN DESPAIR
- RIGHT HERE IN BRONX JEROME AVE. SOLICIT DAY LABOR



Labor after the Depression

Slavery... 1939 Style

Bronx Slave Mart Is Active as Ever

By MARVEL COOKE

I DIDN'T get a job on the Bronx Slave Market last week; but three men tried to pick me up.

Even with six patrolmen vigilantly policing one of the most famous of the market's corners, Westchester Avenue and Southern Boulevard, these men—one a shopkeeper, and the others, evidently on the block for illicit purposes—indicated by one means or another for the two hours in which I diligently attempted to sell my muscle and brawn to a Bronx housewife. Did my "services" might be "degradable"?

For years, labor and social groups and the Domestic Workers Union have tried to clean up this area, but it might easily degenerate from a "slave market" to a red light district, were it not for the fact that most of the girls themselves are actually interested in such painful employment. But



Undercover Investigation

- Ella Baker



Marvel Cooke



Expose

Help Wanted: The Bronx Slave Markets and the Exploitation of Black Women Domestic Workers

By Makoroba Sow, Librarian II

April 15, 2022

[Stephen A. Schwarzman Building](#)

In 1939, a graduate student named Lois Taylor went undercover on the streets of the Bronx. The subject of Taylor's months-long investigation was the so-called "slave markets" that had proliferated on the street corners of New York's northernmost borough. Posing as a jobseeker, Taylor documented the markets for her Columbia University [master's thesis](#). At the infamous Bronx Slave Markets, Black women gathered to find domestic work in the homes of white families. On street corners, outside shops, and in empty lots, women waited for prospective employers to approach, size them up, and bargain for day labor. Rates were as low as 15 to 20 cents an hour or one dollar a day. Comparisons to antebellum America were hard to ignore. Of her own investigation, journalist [Marvel Cooke wrote](#): "I was a slave traded for two truck horses on a Memphis street corner in 1849. I was a slave trading my brawn for a pittance on a Bronx street corner in 1949. As I stood there waiting to be bought, I lived through a century of indignity."

Amsterdam News Report

"When Is America Coming In?" - - British Public

Got the Jump
By The League Executive Planning
The Amsterdam News
Alerts We Had a Man in
Europe a Week Before It
Began

**NEW YORK
Amsterdam News**

**NATIONAL
EDITION**

VOL. XXX, No. 42 IN TWO SECTIONS NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1939 SECTION ONE 33 CENTS

U. S. TO INCREASE NEGRO TROOPS

World War Veterans Score Southern Jim Crow

MAID ACCUSES RICH EMPLOYERS OF ASSAULT

**EXPANSION OF
REGULAR ARMY
IS ANNOUNCED**

By Secretary Woodring
Kevada Declares for
More Negroes

CHICAGO (AP)—
The United States may in-
crease its "regular army"
by 100,000 men, Secretary
of War George D. Blanding
Woodring announced today.
The new troops will be
drawn from the reserves
and will include a certain
number of Negroes.

COURT SEVERS MARITAL TIES

**LEGION MEN
RAP PREJUDICE
AT CONVENTION**

Colored Delegates Unite
Behind Anti-Apartheid
U.S. Jim Crow

CHICAGO (AP)—
Nearly a quarter of a million
Legionnaires and visitors at-
tended the Chicago leg. con-
vention and a thousand Negroes
also. A 10-day national confer-
ence, September 24-30, at the
McCormack Hotel, Chicago, was
held to discuss the situation.

STREKES

**POLAND'S END
FRENCH TOPIC
OF DISCUSSION**

John Reports Fortifies
Aim Looking for
U.S. to Enter

**By COL. ROBERT
FALWYLER JULIAN**
Specialist Staff War
Department

PARIS, Sept. 24.— The
fact that in the last stages
of the Indo-Chinese war
the French had to retreat
was a subject of discussion
at the meeting.

IN HOSPITAL

**YOUNG WOMAN
HALES COUPLE
BEFORE JUDGE**

Confined to Hospital by
Injuries Received
in Incident

MT. VERNON, N. Y.—
Mrs. Beulah Hales, widow of
22 West Third street, New
York City, is awaiting trial in
the Federal court today in
the case of an al-
leged beating and killing
of her husband.



News

“Rain or shine, cold or hot, you will find them there Negro women, old and young sometimes bedraggled, sometimes neatly dressed but with the invariable paper bundle, waiting expectantly for Bronx housewives to buy their strength and energy for an hour, two hours, or even for a day at the munificent sum of fifteen, twenty, twenty-five or if luck be with them, thirty cents an hour.”



Later, while working for the Compass, a progressive daily newspaper, Cooke returned to the topic of domestic laborers. She also told the stories of sex workers. In both series, Cooke centered the stories on the lives of the women. She was considerate and deliberate. She made sure that readers understood the rich, full, and complex

lives of these women.

Reparations Remedies

- Laurence Fishburne reads a letter by Jourdan Anderson to his former slave master.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evi_i7R0SFQ
- When you compensate him and his wife, would total \$11,000+
- . When he receives that compensation, he will return to labor on his plantation. Until then...